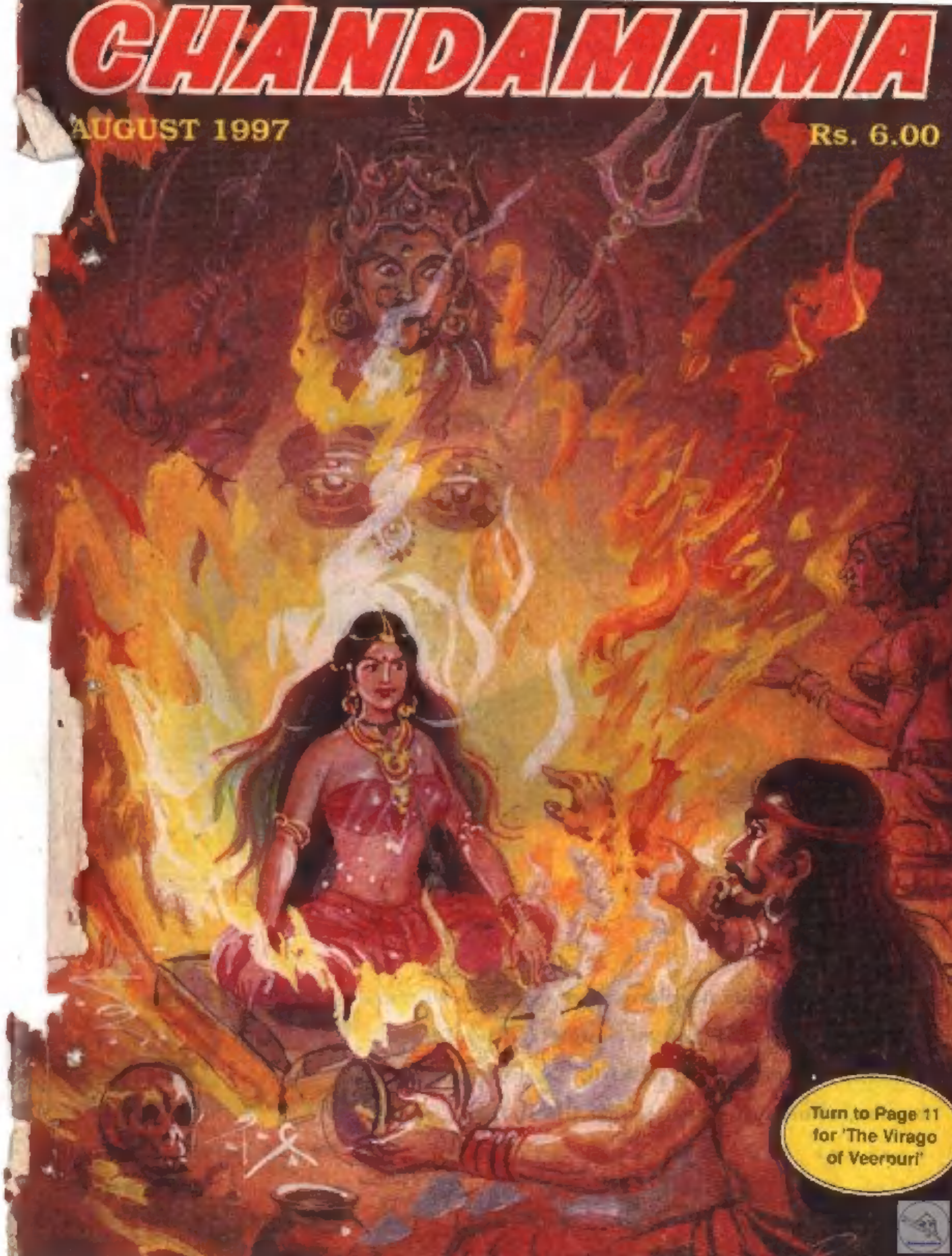


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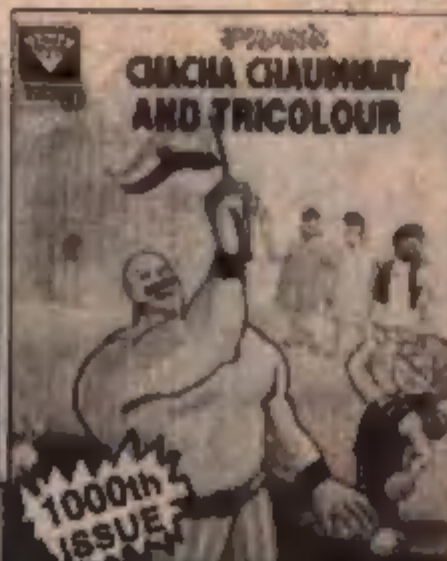
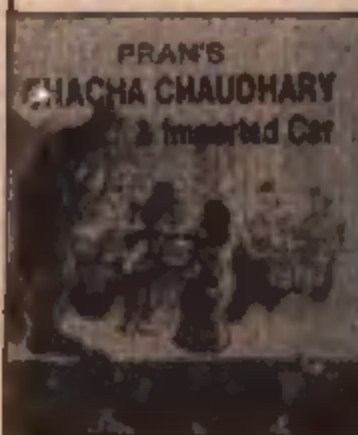


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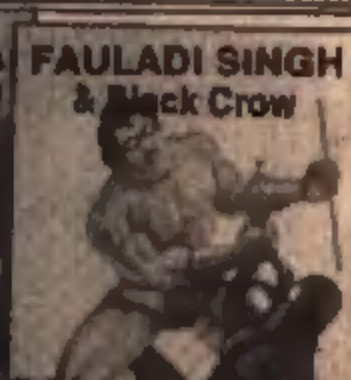
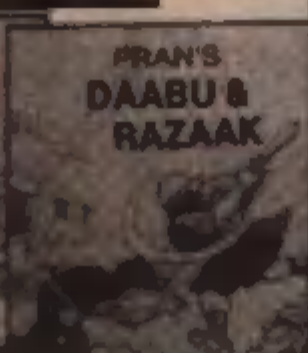


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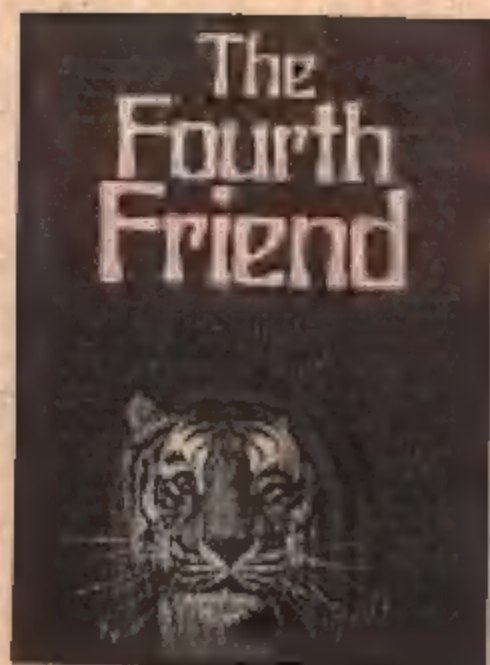
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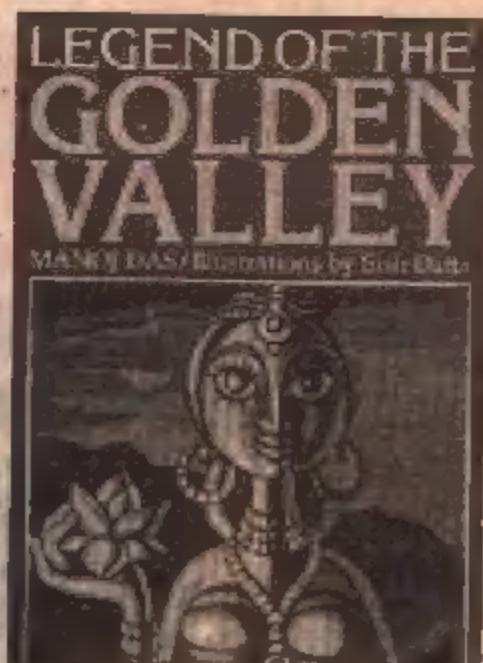
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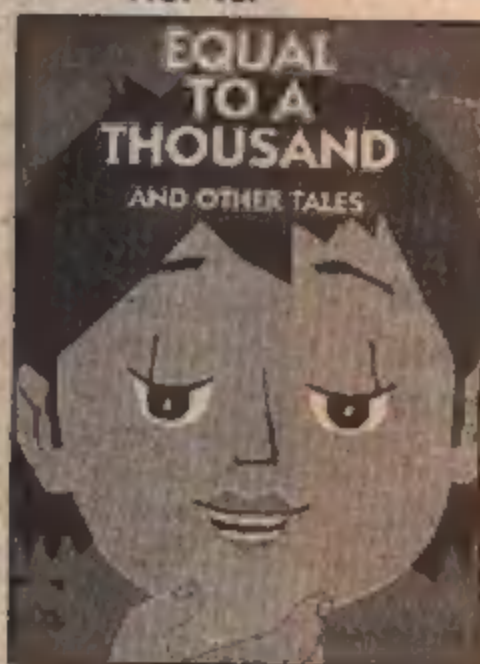
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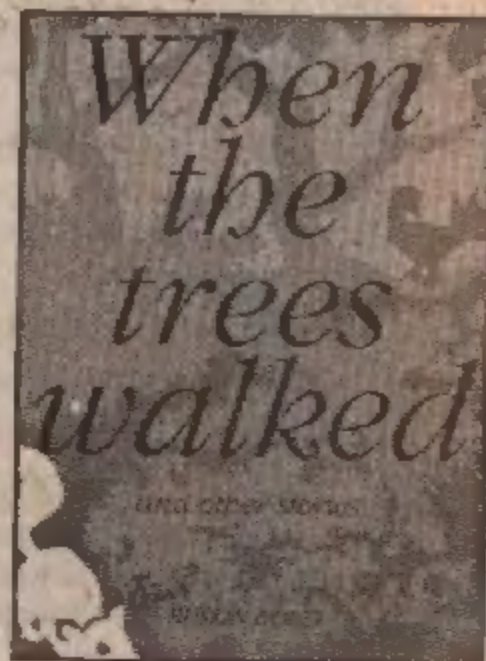


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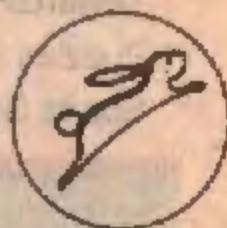
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NEXT ISSUE

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THE SAGA OF 1857 : The young widow Lakshmi Bai, Rani of Jhansi, is horrified: the English traders-turned-rulers will not accord due recognition to the baby prince and his claim to the throne when he grows into adulthood. The Rani realises that if she does not fight for the sake of the prince, the dynasty will cease to exist, and the kingdom will go to foreign hands. She looks for allies.

THE VIRAGO OF VEERPURI : The Yuvaraja of Mahendragiri uses his wizardry to wreak vengeance on all those who, according to him, have been unfair to the kingdom. Vajreshwari is his "medium", and she metamorphoses into Vairamukhi. Nobody in Veerpuri is able to recognise her and she gets all the freedom to carry out her mission. The virago goes into action. Who is her first victim? None other than her father!

MAHABHARATA : Yudhishthira tells Krishna the efforts of King Dhritarashtra to make his son, Duryodhana, see reason, and how he has rejected all pleas by the elders. Krishna blames Sakuni and Karna for dissuading Duryodhana from accepting peace overtures. Krishna decides to go to Hastinapur for a final appeal to the king. He calls on Vidura, Kunti Devi, Duryodhana, and some Kaurava kinsmen. He once again reminds Dhritarashtra that the Pandavas are after all his own brother's sons. What's his reaction?

PLUS COASTAL JOURNEYS, They stood up to the British in comics form, and all other features.





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Controlling Editor : B. NAGI REDDI

Towards Freedom

We are observing the 50th year of our achieving Independence. Behind this achievement lies years and years of struggle and sacrifice.

When did India begin to resent the foreign yoke? When was its first protest heard?

No doubt, the most well-organised revolt against the colonialists took place in 1857. We are running a serial on that epoch-making episode, beginning with this issue. But there had also been sporadic revolts and rebellions right from the day the East India Company cleverly tried to become a zamindar, instead of remaining satisfied with buying and selling for which the Indian kings had given them permission.

Each phase of India's struggle for freedom, each episode, had its idealism. We will shed light on them in our future editorials.



Greetings
on the occasion of the
Golden Anniversary of
CHANDAMAMA

Dear Readers, Patrons, and Friends,

It is not a coincidence in the ordinary sense of the term that the 50th Anniversary of our Independence coincides with the 50th Anniversary of your magazine. The two friends behind this publication, Shri B. Nagi Reddi and the late Chakrapani, launched this adventure with the idealism that the children of India, despite their different languages, should be united in their knowledge of their country's heritage, should smile, think, and dream together. Hence this magazine in so many languages.

As we look back, we feel rewarded that the magazine has continued to perform its role towards that lofty goal, despite formidable hurdles, continuous rise in the cost of paper and production and onslaught on the healthy reading habit of people by unscrupulous elements flooding the market with undesirable reading materials as well as by misguided electronic media.

If *Chandamama* is still sustained, it is because of its faith in the conscience and goodwill of man. Indeed, generations of young readers have proved that ours is not a misplaced faith. We assure all our well-wishers that as they have honoured our trust in them, we will continue to hold dear their goodwill and trust in us.

On this happy occasion *Chandamama* greets them all.

S. Vasanthakumari
Publisher

The Mystery Plant

Once upon a time a poor traveller got lost in the course of his journey. He was thirsty and hungry. For two long days and nights he did not take a morsel of food, nor was he lucky enough to come across a friendly stream to quench his parching throat. Through forests and up and down the hills he plodded his way with the sheer strength of his will and the hope that perhaps round the bend of the road there would be a happy surprise.

Well, as the pathway took a turn, lo! and behold, true to his hopes, there lay in front of him a wee little hamlet. At once his heart leapt up in joy and he exclaimed, "Now, surely some gentle folk will welcome a weary guest!"

But alas, all the doors he knocked at were only answered with rudeness. For, the people of the village were selfish and never entertained a guest. What to do? He had already begun to feel very weak. He advanced with much difficulty.

Surprisingly, utter hunger and thirst all of a sudden gave him a brainwave. Aware that the inhabitants here were a miserly and greedy lot and would do anything to gain more wealth and power, he put his idea into



trial and hoped for the best.

From then on whomsoever he met on the road he whispered into his ears:

"I know of a marvellous plant!

It can revive a man from the brink of death!

O Friend, who liv'st in this hamlet full of want,

Hearken! I'll share my secret, have faith!"

The news spread like wild fire that a stranger who had suddenly arrived in their village claimed to know the secret of immortality. The attitude of the selfish people underwent a change. Welcoming him with due respect, they coaxed him to spend the day with them.

"All right!" readily agreed their



guest. "I'll spend a day with each one of you. The only problem is I'll be late to reach my destination unless I get a horse to carry me."

"You'll get a horse," assured the village headman. In fact, the very next day they bought him a fine horse.

So the poor wayfarer was looked after like a king by the villagers, each one trying to outsmart the other in his hospitality. Naturally, at the back of their minds they all pined for the knowledge of the great secret!

When the turn of the last of the villagers was over to play host and it was time for the stranger to depart, the headman went to him and politely reminded him of his promise :

"Now, dear Sir, will you not enlighten this ignorant lot about that wonderful plant?"

"Well, first bring me the horse and then follow me, keeping some distance," advised the guest.

So the stranger trotted on horseback while the folks followed

behind in eager anticipation that soon they would know the secret which would enable them to live for ever.

The sun was setting when they reached the fields in the neighbourhood. The rider suddenly stopped and, pointing to the rice crops, said : "There! There grows the miraculous plant!"

"What?" protested the headman. "You don't mean rice?"

"Of course I do!" asserted the guest.

"Are you joking?" cried out the others.

"Certainly not! I'm serious and I'm telling you in real earnest that without the rice you so lovingly fed me with all these days, I would have been dead by now!" said the visitor with an emphatic chuckle.

The headman and villagers looked on helpless. They could not find any fault with the stranger's words. They looked on as their guest increased the speed of the horse and disappeared in the twilight mist.

- Retold by Anup Kishore Das





THE VIRAGO OF VEERPURI

The story so far: Army commander Marthandvarma of Veerpuri has a daughter born to him. Unlike King Soorasen's and Prime Minister Bodheshwar's second daughter, who was born around the same time, Vajreshwari is adventuresome. On a hunting trip in the company of her brother Vijaykrishna, she strays into the forest and enters a cave. Suddenly, the mouth of the cave is blocked by a boulder and she decides to go forward and enters a tunnel. In the dark, a man's hand falls on hers. He calls her a princess and offers to lead her out. She lands in Mahendragiri - a kingdom she has never heard of. She is taken to the Raja, who is not the real king. He greets her and tells her that she can save Mahendragiri. She is entrusted to Mother Mohini and two attendants. Is Vajreshwari safe? How can she be of help to Mahendragiri?

Vajreshwari lay in bed, but she could not get any sleep for a long time. For the present, there was nothing to complain about. She was being looked after well by the two attendants, Malini and Shahini. She, however, noticed that she was never left alone. One of them would always be with her. They took turns in keeping her company. Strangely, neither of

them was willing to respond to her queries. The girl would merely answer: "I don't know, princess" or "I shall ask Mother Mohini". Anyway she never came into the room even for once, and Vajreshwari had to suppress her curiosity to find more about the elusive Mohini. Still stranger was, the girls did not engage her in conversation by asking her about



herself. As Malini and Shalini continued to address her as 'princess', Vajreshwari decided to pretend to be one. Now there was no point in waiting for her to be left alone, so she closed her eyes and tried to induce some sleep.

However much she racked her brain, she could not locate Mahendragiri where she was supposed to have landed after her not-too-exciting journey through the cave and the tunnel. She had heard of all the neighbouring kingdoms of Veerpuri but never had once come across the name Mahendragiri. Who could it be its ruler? Would she ever meet him? Or would she be disposed of by whoever posed as Master?

"Princess! Wake up! Please get ready! Master will see you presently!" Vajreshwari was woken up by the girls from either side of the bed. She deliberately took some time to open her eyes. After all, wasn't she a princess? And she would also take her own time to get ready. Nobody was going to order her about, she decided, come what may.

Vajreshwari opened her eyes, but did not get up immediately. She looked around to take stock of the situation. No, Mohini was not around. "When does your Master want to see me? I didn't sleep well last night; so I wish to sleep for some more time if your Master won't mind waiting."

"That we don't know, princess," said Malini. "But I shall go and ask Mother Mohini," she added before leaving the room.

While she had her eyes closed once again, Vajreshwari began thinking furiously what attitude she would adopt when she was taken to Master. She would insist on meeting the king, to whom she would plead that she be sent back to Veerpuri. She just then heard Malini coming in. "Princess, you'll be taken to our Master the moment you're ready." That meant no more sleep for her.

"Your bath is ready, princess," said Shalini, "and your clothes have been selected."

After Vajreshwari had had her bath, the girls helped her to dress up. By

then Mohini came into the room. "I shall take her myself; you both remain here," she told the girls. She accompanied Vajreshwari up to the end of a corridor where a man wearing a mask was waiting for them. "Now you go with him, Princess!" she told Vajreshwari, remaining there till she went out of sight.

"The princess is here, Master!" The servant announced and withdrew on receiving a nod from him.

It was not the room where Vajreshwari had met him the previous evening. There was a huge idol of goddess Kali in front of which was a low stool with a velvet cushion placed inside a pit similar to one generally used for performing *homam*. Master sat on a lower stool facing the pit and the idol behind it. There were some lamps lit around the pit, the flickering flames from them throwing an eerie glow all over. Master appeared chanting some *mantras*, but softly. His eyes remained closed till the attendant moved away from the room.

He then opened his eyes. "Ah, Princess! Please be seated." And he signalled her to sit on the *peetam* in front of him.

Vajreshwari hesitated for a moment. Master smiled, reassuringly. "I told you yesterday that you've come at an appropriate time to be of great help to Mahendragiri. Today I shall tell you how."

By the time he finished saying



this, Vajreshwari had taken her seat. She sat crosslegged on the stool which she found quite comfortable. She had by then decided to ask him the one question she was churning in her mind. "Sir, who's the ruler of Mahendragiri? Can I have an audience with him?"

"You'll get your answers when I tell you what we propose to do with you, princess," Master replied, all the while looking into her eyes. He then closed his eyes again and the slight movement of his lips indicated that he was chanting some more *mantras*. Then there was absolute silence for a little while and he slowly opened his eyes and spoke suddenly. "I'm going to tell you a story, and let me warn you, you won't like some parts of it."



But don't interrupt me with questions which I shall not answer. Just listen!"

He chanted a mantra, now aloud. It was in praise of goddess Kali. He took an incense burner with a long handle and placed a lump of camphor in it. He lit it and held it in front of the idol for just a moment and suddenly blew into it. The tall flame was blown out as suddenly as it was lit, leaving a thick smoke to engulf the entire room.

Vajreshwari was not scared, but she had an uncanny feeling that her mind was now devoid of any thought and she could not even remember how or when she had reached that strange room. She looked around for a clue.

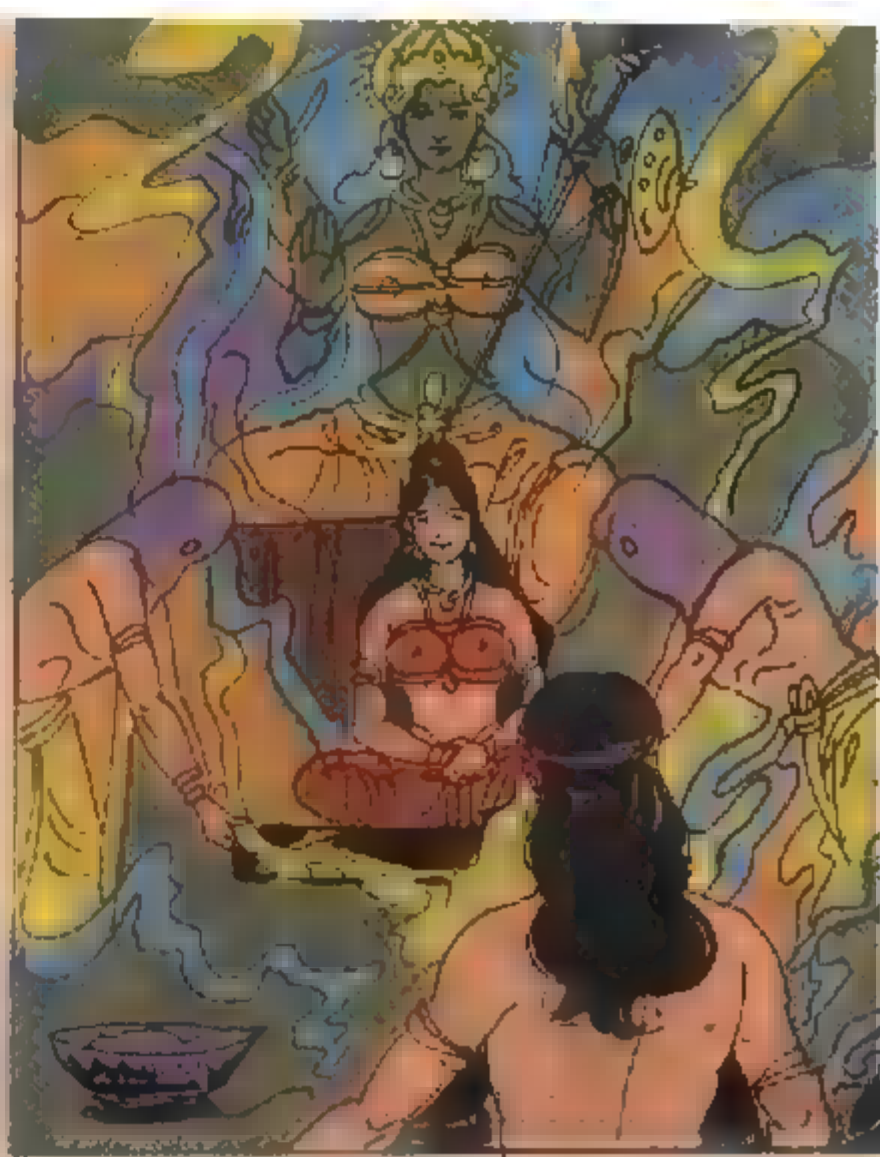
"The Raja of Saptagiri," began

Master, "had three sons and a daughter. The birth of a daughter as the fourth child is generally not taken kindly and so Princess Suryaprabha grew up without much of parental affection or attention from her brothers. Before his death, King Rudrapratap had annexed Senapuri where he made his son Mahendravarma its ruler. The younger son Marthandavarma was expecting that position, because it was he who had won the last battle for Senapuri; the elder brother would have even otherwise succeeded their father as the King of Saptagiri. But Rudrapratap had other ideas. Marthandavarma now directed his disappointment and anger towards his brother and began plotting to overthrow his father. The king was aware of the conspiracy being hatched by his son and wanted him to be away from the kingdom till he could anoint the third son Surendravarma as the crown prince. So, when Suryaprabha was given away in marriage to Soorasen of Veerpuri, he recommended Marthandavarma to King Vikrantzen, who appointed him Commander of Veerpuri. Marthandavarma was clever enough to see through his father's game, but accepted the position because he knew that with the help of a strong army, he could win back Saptagiri and oust his brother from Senapuri, and if Soorasen, who had been childless for some time, were to die without leaving

a heir, he could make his own son, Vijaykrishna the ruler of Veerpuri! Rudrapratap died all of a sudden. His elder son Mahendravarma, who preferred to retain Senapuri, larger in size than Saptagiri, made his youngest brother Surendravarma the ruler of Saptagiri. Marthandavarma was away in the mountains inspecting the regiments placed on duty there, and so was not aware of his father's death and other sudden changes in Saptagiri for a long time."

Vajreshwari listened to the narration silently. Though some names that sounded familiar to her were mentioned, they did not register in her mind. She sat like in a trance. Master placed some more camphor in the incense burner and lit it, blowing the flame on to the idol in front of him. The room was once again enveloped in smoke.

Vajreshwari shook herself out of the trance and looked around. Master was missing. She looked around once again. He was nowhere to be seen. She found herself unable to move from her seat. It was as if she was glued to the peetam. Suddenly she heard a loud clapping from behind. Four times. Soon four masked men came into the room and lifted the peetam and reversed its direction. Now she sat facing the figure of Kali, and between the idol and herself sat Master, with his back towards the figure of the goddess. Vajreshwari



was now able to see the full figure and she was awestruck. Suddenly she regained consciousness and asked, "What do you want me to do?"

"I haven't completed my narration yet," said Master, rather curtly. He stared at her for some time. "King Rudrapratap of Saptagiri had a sister, Snehaprabha. She was married to Kirtichandra of Mahendragiri. They had two sons, Pratapchandra and Vinayachandra. Pratapchandra had a physical defect and so, it was Vinayachandra who succeeded Kirtichandra. Suryaprabha was betrothed to Pratapchandra before the accident which had crippled him. Because of his physical defect, the marriage did not take place and the



princess of Saptagiri was married off to Soorasen, the prince of Veerpuri. At the wedding Vinayachandra represented Mahendragiri, where the crafty Marthandvarma, brother of Suryaprabha, picked ■ quarrel with him and administered poison to him in the hope that once he was removed from the scene, it should not be difficult to get a hold on Mahendragiri, as the crippled prince would not offer much of a resistance. However, the poison did not have ■ immediate effect on Vinayachandra. Later, every now and then he fell into fits of melancholia, with the result no proposals of marriage came for him from any princesses. There was no prospect of Pratapchandra also taking

■ bride. In short, it was almost certain that Mahendragiri would go without an heir.

"The wily Marthandvarma saw to it that Prince Soorasen did not visit Mahendragiri when he was going round the neighbouring kingdoms soon after his wedding. As movement was restricted Pratapchandra spent most of his time poring over ancient treatises on mysticism, magic, and the mystery of nature. He acquired and accumulated uncanny powers over mind and body, not only of himself but of others, too."

He paused and stared at Vajreshwari, to find whether at least now she had guessed who is who, and what her role was going to be. A glow was slowly coming over her face. "Princess! Yesterday you asked me if I was the Raja. For some people in Mahendragiri, I am Yuvaraja, but many others would prefer to call me Raja, because of my brother's condition. I'm Pratapchandra, and my brother Vinayachandra is the king. I know that you very much wish to meet him, but I'm afraid you can't, because he's not in the right mental state, where he'll recognise people and talk to them or listen to them. We don't know when he'll come out of that state, but when he is normal, you'll meet him and, who knows there won't be a change in him - ■ change for the better - and he may not decide to make you his queen!"

"Did you say queen? Am I to become his *queen*?" Vajreshwari burst out in excitement.

"Why not?" said Master. "But before that you have to make yourself deserving of his hand!"

"How? Tell me!" said Vajreshwari.

"I wish to take revenge on all those who have been unfair to Mahendragiri," said Master, choosing his words carefully and slowly so that she would understand their significance. "Princess, you will act on *my* behalf! From now on you're not Vajreshwari. However, you'll go back to Veerpuri in a new role."

He placed another lump of camphor in the incense burner and held it in front of Vajreshwari. Suddenly all the lamps went out and there was only the rising flame from the camphor. A thick smoke engulfed the room.

"Princess! Are you Vajreshwari?" Master called out loudly, to find out

whether she had come out of her trance.

"No, Master!"

"Then who are you?"

"I am ... I am ..." she said, hesitatingly. "I'm nobody in Veerpuri! But everybody will come to know me as Vairamukhi." She then swooned.

When Vajreshwari came back to her senses, she found herself in her bed. Shalini and Malini were fanning her from either side.

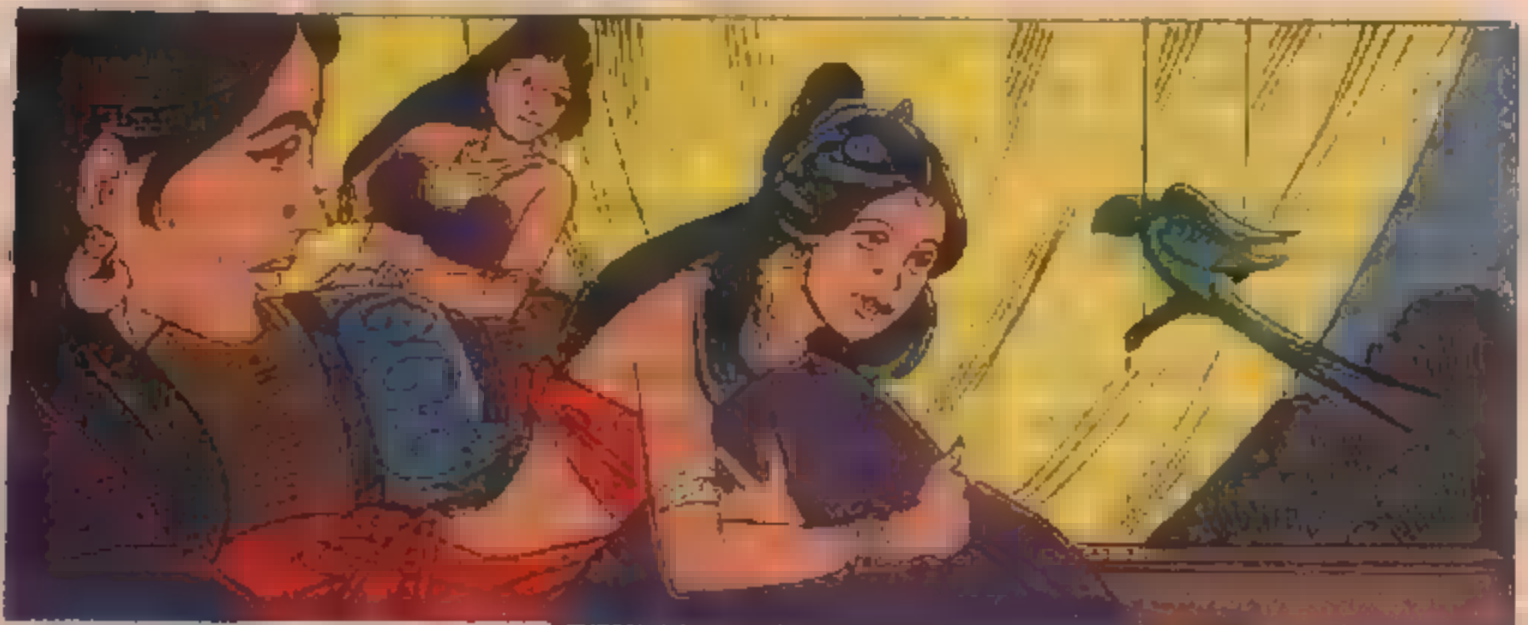
"Princess Vairamukhi! Would you like to sleep for some more time?" Shalini was asking?

"Shall I prepare your bath?" queried Malini.

Vajreshwari sat up in her bed. "Yes, I shall have my bath and get ready. Master will call for me to give me instructions."

"Yes, Princess, as you wish," said Shalini.

(To continue)



Children in the news

Steering at six

Children love to be photographed sitting behind ■ steering wheel or on the bonnet of ■ car, don't they? If ever you come across 6-year-old Sadasivam behind the steering wheel of a Maruti "Omni", don't take your eyes away, because you will find him driving away - like an experienced driver! He has been "at the wheel" since January this year. Son of Murali and Padmavathi, this 1st Standard student of Sree Adhithiya



Matriculation School in Vanagaram, Chennai, held the First rank in U.K.G. last year. He also stood First in Elocution conducted by the school.

Matriculate ■ nine

This world record is claimed by Thathagath Avtar Tulsī, who completed the 10th Standard under the CBSE (Central Board ■ Secondary Education) scheme last May when he was only 9 years. How did he manage it? Unlike many other tiny-tots, he did not attend the Nursery Class. He was straight away

admitted to the 3rd class. That year, he covered the syllabus of the 4th and 5th classes as well. So, next year he went and sat in the 6th class. In 1995, the family



shifted to Delhi where Thathagath was admitted to ■ public school in the 7th class. During the 1996-97 academic year, he studied in the 8th class but covered the syllabus of both 9th and 10th classes and applied for admission to the public examination. The CBSE objected, as he ■ yet to reach the qualifying age for appearance at the public examination. His father then approached the Court which, on February 26, directed the CBSE to give him ■ hall ticket. He did not disappoint anybody. He is considered the youngest matriculate in the world.

A world record

You have seen a car or ■ jeep being driven over ■ circus *pehalwan*, haven't you? Three years ago, when she ■ only 15, Sumita Singh of Dhanbad, allowed a 1,550 kg motor ■ to pass over her. Last April, she took on ■ 3,200 kg truck, which was rolled over her stomach by 25 jawans of the Rapid Action Force, who pushed the vehicle from behind and from both sides. And Sumitha (weight ■ kg, height 160 cm) ■ lying on the bare ground and not on a mattress as is normally seen in circus shows. Breaking electric bulbs and eating the pieces is just child's play for Sumita, who once had a 100 kg stone placed on her stomach and broken with a 5 kg hammer.



STORIES FROM MAHABHARATA

The story so far: The term of banishment having expired, Yudhishthira demands that the kingdom of Indraprastha be restored to him. The old blind king, Dhritrashtra, his queen, and the aged and virtuous counsellors advise the restoration, but the envious Duryodhana who hates his cousins and is filled with lust and greed, refuses his consent. All negotiations seems futile, and preparations are afoot on both sides for the most disastrous battle that has ever been witnessed in India. Lord Krishna, in his great wisdom, foresees the futility of the war, and decides to make one last effort to make the parties choose peace instead of any violent conflict.

Duryodhana turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of Dhritrashtra. All the kings assembled in the court knew without a shadow of doubt that war was inevitable.

The old king desired his sons to win in the event of a war. So he called Sanjaya aside and asked, "You know all about the Pandavas. Describe to me their strength."

Sanjaya told him everything about the mighty preparations of the Pandavas but emphasised their genuine desire for peace.

Then, thinking that Dhritrashtra

might be persuaded to adopt a peaceful stance, he said, "I shall tell you all about their desire for peace. But first let me call Sage Vyasa and Gandhari. You will be able to understand the situation better in their presence."

Vyasa and Gandhari came in response to Sanjaya's invitation.

Sanjaya then said :

"O king, Lord Krishna is a Divine Incarnation and Arjuna is his favourite hero. Your sons cannot defeat them. This is the great secret that I now reveal to you."



Rather surprised, Dhritarashtra queried tremulously, "Sanjaya! How did you find this out? I did not know of this till now!"

Sanjaya replied, "Sir, ignorance blinds your court. Knowledge has opened my eyes to the truth of the matter."

Sage Vyasa voiced his support of Sanjaya: "Lord Krishna likes you immensely. Sanjaya, too, knows who Lord Krishna is, well and truly. So the best for you is to listen to his counsel."

These words impressed Dhritarashtra greatly. After all, the Pandavas were his own brother's children. Duryodhana should make peace with them. After what Sanjaya had revealed about the colossal

strength and formidable array of the supporters of the Pandavas, the Kauravas could never hope to win in the coming war.

At about the same time, in Upablavya, Yudhishtira spoke to Lord Krishna: "Krishna, it is now that we need the help of good friends. They are all there, but for true light we can only turn to you. We shall fight the Kauravas bravely because you are with us."

Lord Krishna did not reply, but smiled benignly. Yudhishtira continued: "You heard what Sanjaya had to say. Dhritarashtra wants to make peace with us without giving back our property. We suffered in exile because we listened to his words. He will always side with Duryodhana. We need only five villages. Even that he is not willing to give. A Kshatriya will never beg from anyone. He would rather die than accept charity. Therefore, there is no way but to fight. What do you say?"

Lord Krishna said: "I view everything impartially. I desire good for both the parties. I shall go and talk to the Kauravas. If I can bring them around, then peace will be established."

Yudhishtira agreed with this. "That is good. But Duryodhana must see this in the proper light. All his partisans share his views. I am not sure I like your going to their place."

Lord Krishna said: "Yudhishtira,

don't I know Duryodhana? And they too, know who I am. They will not dare harm me. I should not be found wanting in my efforts for peace. Therefore, I must travel to Hastinapura."

Yudhishtira replied softly : "O Lord, you know better than I do about this matter. Try and see that our desire for peace is respected. I should not presume to tell you what you must convey to the Kauravas."

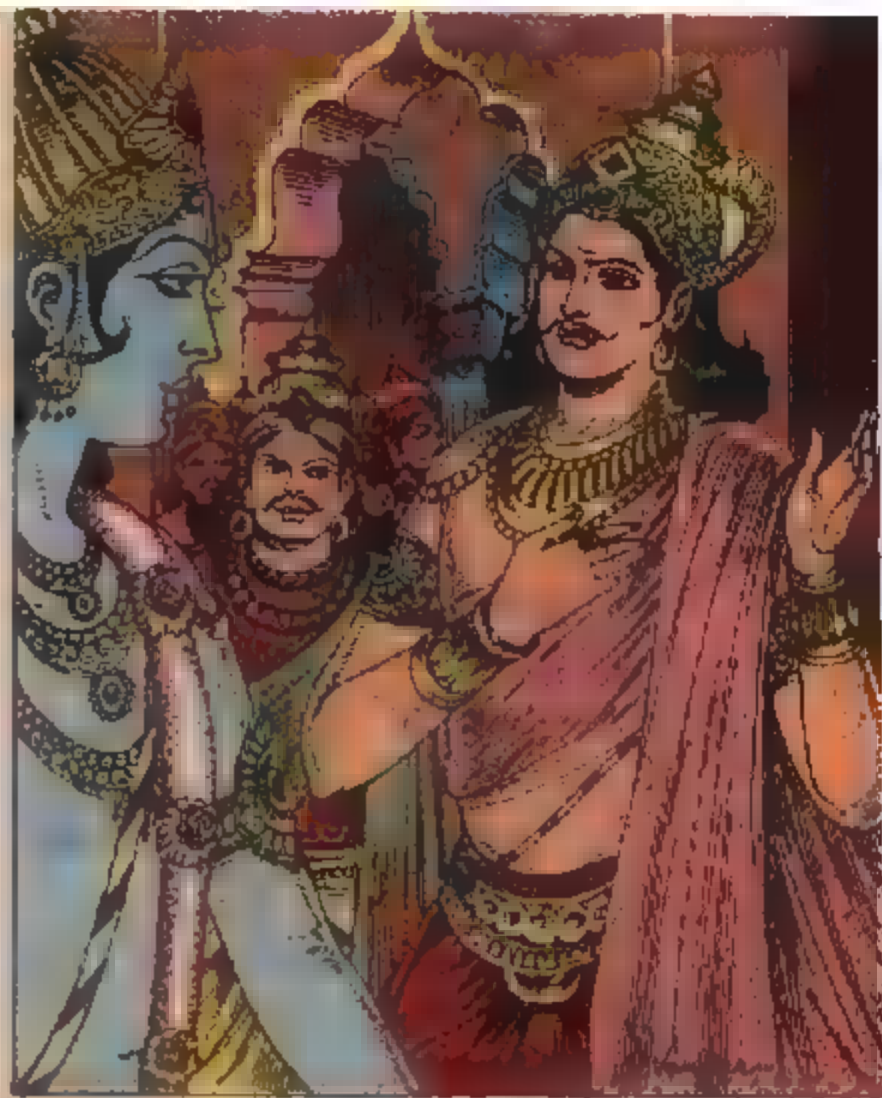
Lord Krishna said : "Yudhishtira, you are a just man. But if the situation demands, a Kshatriya must fight. He will never fear. The Kauravas are also mustering their full strength. I wonder if they will agree to have peace! It doesn't seem that they regret treating you so cruelly. You, too, should not sympathise with them. Even the elders, Drona, Dhritarashtra and Bhishma, are not raising their voices in protest. Anyway, let us try for peace. If that fails, then it must be war."

Having said this, Lord Krishna looked around at the assembly of Pandavas to find out what they thought of his proposals.

"Bhima, what do you say?" he asked.

Bhima replied : "Krishna, it is good that you go and talk to the Kauravas. Try your best and may success crown your efforts."

Lord Krishna chuckled softly and said, "Bhima, you astonish me! Do you want peace, because you are afraid



of the Kauravas?"

Bhima replied spiritedly : "Krishna, I want peace because war may destroy our entire race. You know that I never run away from a fight."

Lord Krishna mollified him by saying, "I only wanted to find out what you thought of all this. I too want peace, because I don't want the entire race to be destroyed. Let me do what I can."

Then he looked at Arjuna who said: "I cannot add anything more to what has already been said by brother Yudhishtira. I doubt whether the Kauravas will welcome your peace efforts. However, nothing is lost by trying. If we don't get what we want, then war is the only answer."

Lord Krishna remarked : "Arjuna, as long as Sakuni and Karna advise Duryodhana, he will never see reason. He will not return your territories. He may even think that you are terrified of him, if you persist in your peace offers."

Both Nakula and Sahadeva voiced the opinion that they should act according to the circumstances. But all agreed that war seemed inevitable. Satyaki said : "Sahadeva is right. It's going to be war, all said and done. While you are away ■ Hastinapura, we shall go ahead with our preparations for war."

All the other warriors shook their standards and raised war cries at his words. Then Draupadi said to Lord Krishna : "If Duryodhana returns the territories of the Pandavas, there will be peace. If not there will be war. The Pandavas can easily kill the Kauravas in a battle. Duryodhana who insulted me that day in the court is still alive. I have not yet tied up my hair. You

could not have forgotten my vow! Duhshasana who pulled me by the hair, must have his hands cut off. Then and only then will I rest satisfied."

Lord Krishna consoled her and prepared to depart for Hastinapura. Then he turned to Satyaki and observed : "Satyaki, make ready my spinning wheel, conch shell, mace, and other weapons. We can never underestimate Duryodhana and his minions." Thus, fully prepared and on his guard, Lord Krishna set out on his journey.

Yudhishtira went to see him off and asked him to convey his greetings to his mother Kunti Devi, Bhishma, Drona, Dhritarashtra, Vidura, and Aswathama.

Lord Krishna's chariot sped towards Vrihasthala. The people of that town welcomed him warmly and vied with each another in showing their hospitality to him.

—To continue



THEY STOOD UP TO THE BRITISH

1

MIR QASIM

STORY: MEERA UGRA
PICTURES: GOUTAM SEN

AFTER THEIR VICTORY IN THE BATTLE OF PLASSEY ON JUNE 23, 1757 THE BRITISH EAST INDIA COMPANY ASSUMED THE ROLE OF KINGMAKER IN BENGAL. THE COMPANY INSTALLED AS SUBEDAR MIR JAFAR, THE COMMANDER WHO HAD BETRAYED HIS MASTER SIRAJUDDAULA. LATER THEY REPLACED MIR JAFAR WITH HIS SON-IN-LAW MIR QASIM IN 1760.



NOW THE
POWERFUL
COMPANY
HAD AN
EDGE OVER
THE LOCAL
TRADERS.

...NOT A
COWRIE
MORE THAN
WHAT I HAVE
OFFERED!

BUT SIRCAR, MY
GOODS ARE
WORTH THREE
TIMES MORE.



DON'T ARGUE! TAKE
THIS ~~IS~~ ADVANCE
AND ~~THE~~ THE
GOODS OR I'LL HAVE
YOU FLOODED.

I'M
RUINED,
SIRCAR!



THE COMPANY OFFICIALS REFUSED TO PAY OCTROI.

SIRCAR, THE COMPANY IS
ONLY MEANT FOR EXPORT, YOU
HAVE TO PAY OCTROI

ARE YOU TRYING
TO TELL ME WHAT
THE LAW IS? GET
OUT OF MY WAY!

THE COMPANY COULD SELL
GOODS AT MUCH LOWER PRICES THAN
THE LOCAL MERCHANTS.

WHY SHOULD I BUY
FROM YOU WHEN THE
WHITE MAN IS
OFFERING THE SAME
FOR HALF THE PRICE!

THE COMPANY CAN
AFFORD TO SELL THEIR
GOODS CHEAP BECAUSE
THEY BUY AT A CHEAPER
PRICE AND THEY DO
NOT PAY TAXES.

IF THIS GOES
ON MUCH
LONGER, WE
WILL ALL BE
RUINED.

WHEN A GROUP OF MERCHANTS CALLED
ON MIR GASIM -

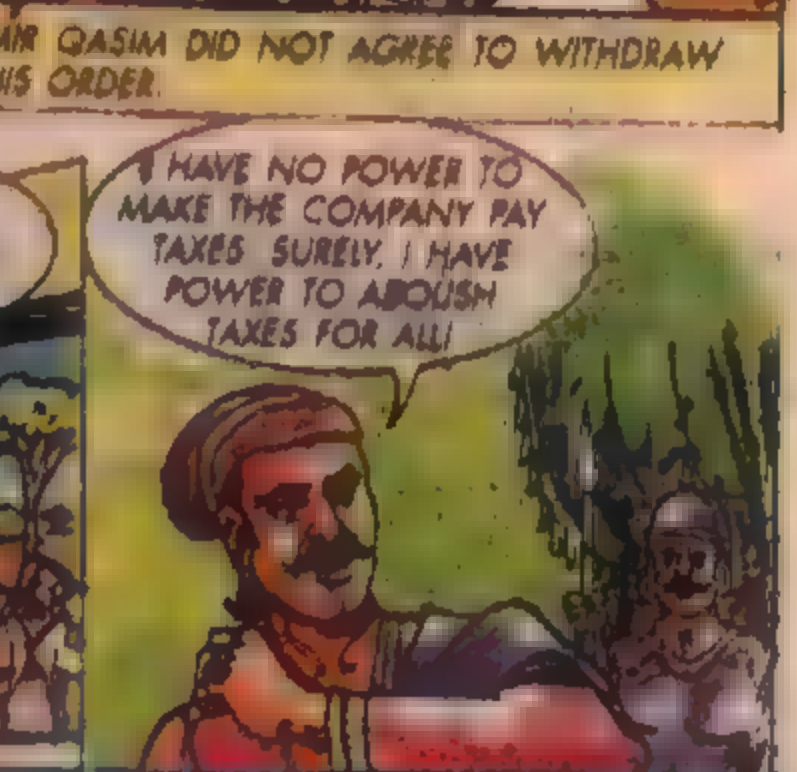
I WILL TELL THE
COMPANY OFFICIALS
TO PUT AN END TO
UNFAIR PRACTICES.

MIR GASIM WROTE TO THE GOVERNOR
OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY. WHEN
THE COMPANY GAVE NO REPLY -

ALL RIGHT, IF WE
CAN'T COLLECT TAXES
FROM THE ENGLISH,
LET US NOT TAX OUR
MERCHANTS EITHER.

ABOLISHED ALL TOLL TAXES AND DUTIES.

THE ENGLISH WERE NOT OUT



ON JUNE 21, 1763 ELIAS THE CHIEF OF THE ENGLISH FACTORY AT PATNA, MOUNTED AN ATTACK ON THE NAWAB'S FORT AT PATNA.



MIR GASIM MARCHED TO PATNA AND CAPTURED ELLIS' GARRISON

BUT MIR GASIM'S FORCES WERE DEFEATED IN OTHER BATTLES THAT FOLLOWED.



THROW THEM INTO PRISON!



I SHALL SEEK THE HELP OF EMPEROR SHAH ALAM AND THE NAWAB OF OUDH.

AT THE BATTLE OF BUKAR ON OCTOBER 22, 1764 THE COMBINED ARMIES OF MIR GASIM AND HIS ALLIES WERE DEFEATED.



SHAH ALAM II FORMALLY GRANTED THE DIWANI OF BENGAL, BIHAR AND ORISSA TO THE EAST INDIA COMPANY ON AUGUST 12, 1765.

MIR GASIM ESCAPED AND WENT TO DELHI WHERE HE LIVED AS A FUGITIVE UNTIL HIS DEATH.



BENGAL WAS ONCE AGAIN SUBJECTED TO EXPLOITATION. RICHARD BECHER, A COMPANY SERVANT, WROTE TO THE SECRET COMMITTEE OF THE COURT OF DIRECTORS ON MAY 24, 1769 - "SINCE THE ACCESSION OF THE COMPANY TO THE DIWANI THE CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY HAS BEEN WORSE THAN IT WAS BEFORE; THIS FINE COUNTRY... IS VERGING TOWARDS RUIN."



New Tales of King Vikram
and the Vampire

A curse on a princess

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. Gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikram did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King, normally you should be enjoying a good sleep at this hour of the night. Instead of doing that, what makes you go through this strange ritual? It looks as though you're affected by a curse. Sometimes people may inadvertently commit a crime or an error, inviting the wrath of a *muni* or a god. There is the good example of Princess Apama. You should hear her story. Listen carefully." The vampire then began his narration. The king continued to walk forward and did not interrupt himself or the vampire.



The royal couple of Anangapuri had been married for sixteen long years; but they remained childless. The queen did not conceive. She observed *vrat*; she offered special worship at temples; she undertook several pilgrimages. Still she was not blessed with a child.

One night, the kingdom was lashed by torrential rains. The queen had a dream. Goddess Durga appeared and told her: "My temple had been in ■ dilapidated condition for a long time. You should renovate it and see that *puja* is conducted daily. You'll receive my blessings."

The next morning, she informed the king of her dream. He listened to her intently, but he had a doubt in his

mind. "I'm not very sure whether what you dreamt is true. For one thing, the place you describe cannot be approached at all. There's no road or even a pathway. The place is full of rocks and boulders, covered with thick bush. It will be impossible even to search for a temple in that area."

"Please don't have any doubt, my lord!" the queen pleaded. "What I saw in my dream is true. The details of the place are still vivid in my mind. Let's at least go there and ■ whether we can find traces of a temple. If we come across even some ruins, we shall have the place cleared and the temple renovated or reconstructed. The devi has asked us to do this for Her sake. I'm sure we'll be blessed with children."

On noticing her excitement, the king agreed to her request and started for the mountains with his entourage. The soldiers and guides cleared the way for the royal couple. Those who led the way spotted something like the ruins of a temple. They hurried to the king and queen and told them of their find. The king was happy and the queen was happier because what she saw in front of her was exactly like what had appeared in her dream.

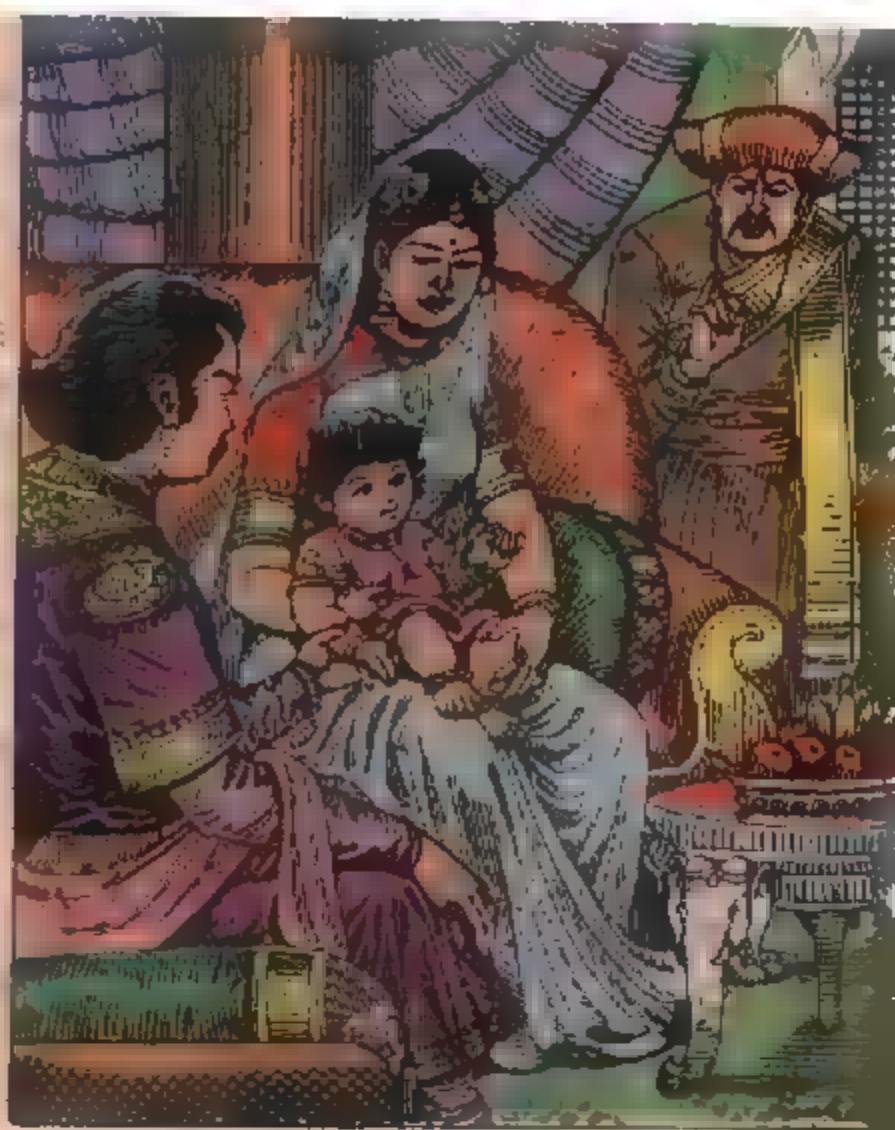
The king ordered the immediate renovation of the temple and restoration of the *puja* rituals. A proper pathway was made so that devotees could approach the temple without any difficulty. On the day of the

reopening of the temple, the worshippers were led by the king and queen themselves. They were very happy. The subsequent days brought calm to the kingdom and prosperity to the people. Before long, the queen was expecting a baby. She continued to worship at the Durga temple, and adorned the idol with a dress in pure silver. In due time, she gave birth to a baby girl, who was very lovely to look at even at birth.

Astrologers were called in to cast her horoscope. Everybody was of the opinion that her name should start with the first letter of the alphabet. So, she was named Aparna. The saddest part of an otherwise joyous occasion was that the baby became blind on the third day of the birth. The king and queen were in deep sorrow.

The princess grew up. She was very clever and soon learnt music. She had a beautiful voice and her singing was something divine. She was very pretty to look at. However, would anybody like to marry a blind princess? wondered her parents. Aparna could guess the agitation in the minds of her parents. "Please don't bother about my marriage," she told them. "Mother Durga will take care of that problem," she comforted them.

Aparna was an ardent devotee of goddess Durga. She would visit the temple every evening with the help of one of the maids-in-waiting. She would sit in meditation in front of the



idol for a long time and when she came out, she would go and sit on a rock for a while in a contemplative mood. This became a daily routine.

One day, as Aparna sat on the rock, the maid prompted her to sing. The princess sang a song. It was divine music. The maid remained with her for some time and slowly slipped out to meet her lover - a young sculptor who was at work on the other side of the temple.

Aparna, who was engrossed in her own music, did not notice the maid's absence. Prince Suryasen of Suryapuri was coming that way at that very moment. He was a born artist and he was struck by the beauty of the girl sitting on the rock. He not



only saw her, but heard her music, too. He remained at a distance enjoying her beauty and her singing.

Soon the maid came back. "It's getting late, princess. Shall we go back to the palace?" The princess got up and left the place along with the maid.

Prince Suryasen could now guess that the girl was none else than the princess of the land. He went back to his palace when his father Chandrasen accosted him. "Son, Suryasen, it's time you got married. The emperor is keen that his daughter, Suvarna, is given in marriage to you. The proposal has come from him direct, and I feel we're very fortunate, especially because I hear the princess has taken

a liking for you. But I should know your opinion before I give my word. What do you say?"

Now, something had happened a couple of years earlier. The emperor had known that Prince Suryasen was a talented artist. So, he invited him to his palace and requested him to paint a portrait of the royal family. While preparing the portrait, he had seen Suvarna who looked plump. She was not ugly but somehow Suryasen thought that she was very fat. Remembering her figure, he turned to his father and said, "So, do you want me to marry a fat, round girl? Can't I get a better match?"

King Chandrasen was angry at his son's remark about Suvarna. "Who do you think you are? Another handsome God of Love? Don't forget that you've a hunch and a squint."

Suryasen protested. "You must respect my wish too in this matter! It is my desire to marry another princess - Aparna of Anangapuri. I've drawn a portrait of the princess. Here it is, just take a look."

Chandrasen, too, was struck by Aparna's beauty as seen in the picture. He stared at the portrait for a long time and then said, "True, my son, she is really a beauty. At the same time, remember, we can't reject the emperor's offer just like that. After all, we're his vassals, and if he takes it into his head, he may even attack us and annex our kingdom. You know

all that very well. It'll therefore, be good for the kingdom and for the royal family if you married Princess Suvarna. Give it a serious thought."

King Chandrasen found that his son was not willing to change his stand and would marry only Aparna. So, he sent some emissaries to Anangapuri to get more details about the princess. They spent some days there and came back with all information about Aparna. They reported everything to the king.

"It looks as though you only saw Aparna from a distance," the king confronted Prince Suryasen with this remark. "You didn't go anywhere near her, nor did you talk to her."

"Yes, father," replied Suryasen. "I enjoyed her beauty from a distance and her music, too. It was something divine. I forgot myself at that time. But I can't forget her face and figure."

"Yes, that is the problem," said King Chandrasen. "If you had gone near her and engaged her in conversation, you would have realised that she is blind!"

Suryasen was shocked to hear that. He was speechless for some time. He took hold of the portrait that he had drawn and looked at it carefully - especially Aparna's eyes. Then he said excitedly, "All the more reason why I married only her!"

"All right! Let it be as you wish. You've my blessings. I shall arrange your wedding with Aparna," said King



Chandrasen, patting his son's back.

The vampire concluded the story there and turned to King Vikramaditya: "O King! The king had warned his son that if he didn't marry the emperor's daughter, they would incur the wrath of the emperor who might even attack the kingdom and annex it. But he seemed to have changed this view, by agreeing to his son's desire and even blessing him. Don't you see a contradiction in his character? Who had cursed Aparna to go blind and Suvarna to become uncouth, though they both were really god-fearing? If you don't give me satisfactory answers, you know what'll happen to you? Your head will be blown to pieces!"



Vikramaditya thought for a while and answered the vampire. "It's true, King Chandrasen did fear the emperor. But he was certain that the emperor would only compliment him and praise his son if he were to know that the prince had married a blind girl. He would take Suryasen to be kind-hearted. And he would have all sympathies for the prince and forget all about conquering Suryapuri. If Aparna had not been blind, she would have noticed the

hunch and squint in Suryasen and might not have married the prince. On the other hand, the prince admired the beauty and music of Aparna. What happened after their marriage would be their fate, and ■■■ else would have been blamed."

The vampire realised that the king had once again been too smart for him. He flew back to the ancient tree, carrying the corpse with him. Vikramaditya drew his sword and went after the vampire.

Answers to GOLDEN HOUR 16

(See Chandamama July 1997, page 43)

WHERE IN THE WORLD

1. Chennakesava temple, Belur, Karnataka 2. Peru, South America 3. Wieliczka, Poland

ANIMAL QUIZ

1. Penguin 2. Chimpanzee 3. Blue Whale 4. Kiwi 5. Ostrich 6. Camel 7. Dingo

TRIP TRAP

In his hurry he has taken somebody else's cycle leaving his own behind.

■■■■ BENDERS

1. A honey locust is not a locust, it is the name of a kind of tree. 2. Throw the ball up. It'll come back to you on its way down! 3. Monkeys found in Asia cannot hang by their tails. Only New World monkeys found in Central and South America can grasp with their tails. 4. He took the pencil and wrote "with my left ear." 5. Wait for it to get up. 6. A two-year old calf 7. Growing older

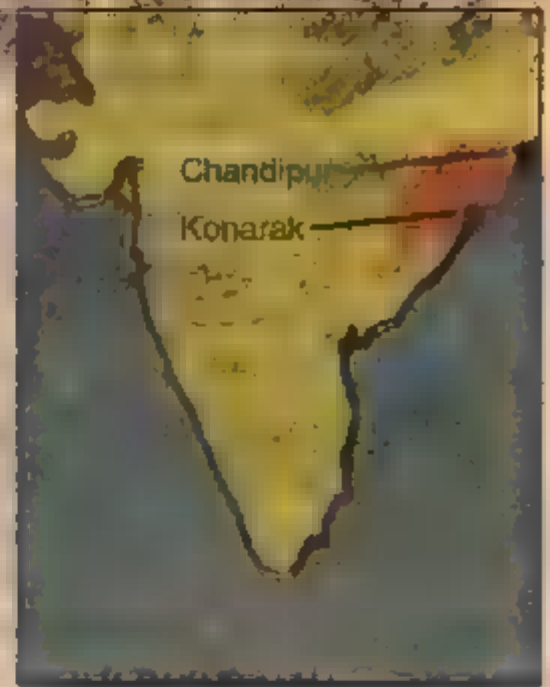
From Puri to Chandipur

Text : Meera Nair ♦ Artist : Gopkumar

A distance of around 32km separates the Jagannath temple from the celebrated Sun Temple of Konarak. Our journey to this architectural marvel is along the picturesque Marine Drive, flanked by the blue waters of the Bay of Bengal on one side and cashew, casuarina, eucalyptus and palm trees and paddy fields on the other.

The main occupations of the people living along this coast are fishing and growing rice. The sowing and harvesting of rice are occasions of ceremony and festivity. Shraban Purnima is a festival at the time of sowing, when boys are made to walk on stilts in the hope that the crops would grow as high.

The black stone chariot temple of Surya can be seen even several miles out at sea. It is the largest temple in the country. It once stood 60m high and was an important landmark for sailors. European sailors called it the Black Pagoda to distinguish it from the white-washed temple of Jagannath in Puri, their other important landmark in the region.



Sowing rice on Shraban Purnima



According to a legend, Samba, the son of Krishna and Jambavati, was stricken with leprosy. So, Krishna asked him to propitiate Surya, the healer of all diseases.

After 12 years of severe penance, Samba was cured of his illness. In gratitude, he erected a temple to Surya. He found an idol of Surya while bathing in the Chandrabhaga river by the side of the temple and installed it in the temple.

The Chandrabhaga, now just a shallow pool, lies 3 km from the temple. Pilgrims take a purificatory bath here just before sunrise on the seventh day of the waxing moon in the Hindu month of Magha (January-February).

King Languda Narashimha Deva of the Ganga dynasty is said to have built the present temple at the site of the legendary temple in the 13th century. It is believed to have taken 1200 workmen 12 years to build it.

Legend has it that the master builder, Bisu Maharana wanted to make the temple a marvel of architecture. He was so engrossed in building it that he neglected his wife and son who lived in his native village. Meanwhile, his son Dharmapada grew up and trained to become a builder like his father. Then one day, he decided to go in search of his father.

Bisu Maharana had almost finished constructing the temple. But due to a miscalculation, he was not able to fix the crowning piece correctly on the temple. This delayed the temple's completion and angered King Narasimha. Bisu was in great

The Sun temple, Konarak



distress when Dharmapada found him. Dharmapada quietly corrected the calculations and the temple was completed.

The tower no longer exists. But even without it, the temple is over 40m high. The huge stone temple was designed in the shape of a mythical chariot of the Sun god, drawn by a team of seven richly caparisoned galloping horses. The horses represent the seven days of the week. The 12 pairs of wheels on the chariot represent the 12 months or the 24 fortnights in a year. Each wheel has 16 spokes (signifying the ancient practice of dividing a day into 16 *prahars*) and is believed to work like a sundial casting shadows at a particular angle at each hour of the day.

For centuries the temple lay abandoned and in ruins. Its massive size attracted attention early this century and it was only when the sand and debris covering it were removed that its magnificence was revealed. The temple has now been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

A journey of a few kilometres to the north takes us to Paradip, a major port of the country. It is the first port on the east coast that was constructed after independence. Paradip is also a pleasant beach resort with a marine promenade. Thousands of giant sea turtles come here every year from places as far off as South America to lay their eggs.



The world's largest gathering of sea turtles takes place at the Gahirmatta Sanctuary higher up the coast. Every year in January or early February, an estimated 10 lakh sea turtles come here to breed and nest. This includes endangered species of sea turtles like the olive ridley. Over 300,000 olive ridley females emerge for nesting along the 10km stretch of the beach.

Our journey further north takes us to Balasore or Baleshwar, a trading port established by the British in 1642. It was here that the great revolutionary leader, Jatindra Nath Mukherji, also known as Bagha Jatin, died after being shot at by the British. Jatin reached Balasore in September 1915 to take delivery of arms and ammunition from the German ship *Maverick*, but was intercepted by the police and killed.

The beachtown of Chandipur in the district of Balasore is famous for its beach which extends more than five kilometres into the sea at low tide. At night the sand shimmers in the moonlight and Chandipur, the 'town of the silvery moon' lives up to its name.



Bagha Jatin

Breeding time



When envy is beneficent

There was once a king who used to relish fish. One fine day a fisherman of his realm brought an unusually large catch. The king was delighted and ordered his treasurer to reward the poor man with two thousand gold coins.

"What? Such a huge reward for just one fish!" thought the treasurer to himself, filled with envy.

But he dared not disobey his master and carried out his biddings to the letter. As the fisherman left the court, the treasurer followed him. On the street, a coin fell from his bag and rolled into a drain. The fisherman searched for it for a full hour and at last recovered it, himself splattered with mud.

The jealous treasurer went back and reported the matter to the king. "Your Majesty! Look at that mean and stingy fellow! Isn't it an insult to the huge reward you gave him? Shouldn't the reward make him broad-minded enough to let go just one coin?"

The fisherman was at that time taking his bath near a well.

The king called him back and asked, "You little fellow, were those gold pieces not enough for you that you must recover a single coin from the depth of a drain?"

"My lord, indeed thy reward



has made me a wealthy man," replied the fisherman bowing courteously.

"Then, why were you so miserly as not to forget even a single coin?" put in the jealous treasurer.

"I feared that if the coin remained in the drain, the hallowed name and figure of Your Majesty engraved on it might get trampled upon by pigs," answered the poor man, calm and grave.

"How wonderful!" exclaimed the king. "You deserve another thousand gold coins!"

The king ordered the treasurer accordingly. Never again in his life did the treasurer try to harm anyone's interest.

—Anup Kishore Das

The Saga of 1857

The year was 1600. It was a great time in the life of England. Though a small country, it was dreaming big.

The country was being ruled by Queen Elizabeth I. The great Shakespeare ■■■ beginning to stage his plays. Sir Walter Raleigh, the explorer, had just brought potatoes and tobacco to his country, and Sir Francis Bacon was writing a new kind of prose to be known as essays, while other illustrious people ■■■ doing other memorable things.

On the last day of the year as well as the century, the Queen signed a charter, giving permission to a group of traders, known as the East India Company, to find markets for their wares in the distant countries in the East. A representative of the Company, Sir Thomas Roe, lived for three years in the court of the Mughal emperor, Jahangir. The emperor took a liking for him and allowed his Company to trade with India. It began with Surat and spread to other places.

By and by the Company became too ambitious to confine itself to merely selling and buying. As the Mughal emperors became weaker, the different rulers of Indian kingdoms grew more and more powerful. They fought among themselves. The Company took advantage of the situation. They raised their own army. They set one ruler against another, favoured one of the rivals and, in the bargain, received a part of the kingdom of the ruler whom they favoured.

In the course of a hundred and fifty years, they became more powerful than any native ruler. They were in ■ position to threaten and blackmail the Indian kings and to take over their states under different pretexts. Thus was formed the British Indian Empire. Those who came to trade with this country and often, their knees bent and hands folded, prayed to the Indian kings, for permission to do so, began snatching away the crowns of their hosts. Merchants became rulers.

About two hundred and fifty years after their arrival in India, discontent against them came to a boiling point. It had to burst into ■ revolt and it did so. Soldiers or sepoys took a great part in it and the British called it the Sepoy Mutiny. But it was much more than that. The revolt was led by people who wanted to end the British rule in India. It should by all means be called the First War of Independence.

The rays of the sun setting on the town of Bithur gave a golden hue to the flowing river Bhagirathi. And, the young man of eighteen and the little girl of seven, who were engaged in a game of fencing on the river bank, were no less dazzling in their golden attires than the dancing waves on the river.

A hundred people looked at the two with amazement and appreciation. Well, there was nothing surprising in the young ■■■ handling his sword at the speed of lightning. But, for that little girl, who herself jumped about like a string of lightning, to move the sword in that way was an unbelievable and unforgettable scene.

"Who's that girl playing with the prince?" the royal priest of Jhansi, on

■ visit to Bithur, asked his host, ■ minister of Peshwa Baji Rao.

"Well, she's Manubai, daughter of Morapant, a noble man. Our prince loves her like his own little sister and teaches her all the martial arts. She is quite small, but you will be astounded if you talk to her. She speaks like a grand old lady, and conducts herself like a Maharani," replied the minister's host.

"Hm. I'm sure, she deserves to become a Maharani," said the priest.

Baji Rao II was ■ descendant of the Peshwa or the Prime Minister of Shivaji, the great Maratha hero who shook the Mughal empire. After Shivaji, the Peshwa became very powerful. By and by, his descendants wielded all the powers of hereditary kings. But the East India Company's





government slowly usurped their authority, by hook or by crook, and Baji Rao II was obliged to live on a pension, without any power. However, his subjects gave him the respect due to a king.

The Peshwa had no children of his own. The wit, intelligence, and nobility of a little boy, Madhavarao, son of one of his courtiers, charmed him. He adopted him. One morning in 1827, the little boy became the Peshwa's heir. It was he who was to become famous as Nana Sahib. The little Manu, with whom he played and whom he taught, was none other than the future Rani of Jhansi, Lakshmibai.

The royal priest of Jhansi, during his stay at Bithur, met Manubai and

her parents several times. The priest was an astrologer. The horoscope of Manubai clearly indicated that she was endowed with extraordinary qualities.

Soon after the priest returned to Jhansi, the Prime Minister of the Maharaja of Jhansi and a few nobles visited Bithur and proposed to Madhavarao his daughter's marriage with Maharaja Gangadhar Rao of Jhansi.

The marriage, no doubt, was a grand affair and Manubai became Rani Lakshmibai. But she was not destined to lead a happy married life. She was only eighteen when her husband died.

A strange fate had befallen both Nana Sahib and Lakshmibai. In 1851, when the Peshwa died, the Company refused to pay the yearly pension to Nana Sahib. Why? Because Nana was not the Peshwa's own son!

Two years later, when Maharaja Gangadhar Rao died, the Company demanded that the kingdom of Jhansi be handed over to it. But the late Maharaja had authorised his queen to adopt a son and she had done so! In Indian tradition, an adopted son or daughter was in no way different from one's own son or daughter! Who ever had questioned the status of Sita as King Janaka's daughter?

It was not that the Company was ignorant of this tradition. Its motive was totally selfish. It was keen to grab

the whole of India and make the country its *zamindari*.

When Nana Sahib ■ told by the Company that he could not expect the pension which the last Peshwa had received, he could not believe his ears. The Peshwa handed over his kingdom to the Company on the company agreeing to pay the annual compensation to its former rulers forever. How could it go back on its word so soon? He demanded to know: "If you stop paying the compensation, shouldn't the kingdom automatically come back to us? If you disregard the condition you had agreed to follow, doesn't the whole contract become invalid?"

The Company did not have the answer to these questions. They were not even interested in explaining anything to the new Peshwa. Because the kingdom had been handed over to the Company, the Peshwa had no army of his own. He could not fight the British and recover his kingdom.

Nana Sahib thought that those who were at the helm of affairs of the Company in London could not be as bad as those of its men in India. He sent an able man named Azimulla to plead his case in London. Azimulla was extremely intelligent, faithful to his master, and charming in his talk. He knew English and French very well. In no time, he made a large number of friends in London. But those who had any say in the Com-



pany matter gave him only false hopes. They had, alas, decided to promote their own interest at the cost of all that is noble in human nature—truthfulness, faithfulness to a treaty, and a consideration for the sentiments of the people of a country ■ which they had imposed themselves.

While Nana Sahib was still hopeful of some good sense prevailing in the foreign merchants, Maharani Lakshmibai was deeply depressed over her husband's death. But she had also solemnised the adoption of an infant boy in the cradle, as desired by her husband.

Calm and confident, the young Maharani saw through both the funeral and the adoption ceremonies.

The nobles of the court, the citizens of Jhansi, and the royal officers saw in her at once a true leader and a mother. It was not easy for a widow, who even did not come of a royal stock, who did not have powerful princely brothers to stand by her at a time of distress, to rule a kingdom. Generally, as soon as a king died without leaving a son, ambitious relatives would begin their intrigues to capture the throne. But, surprisingly, Maharani Lakshmibai held sway over everybody.

"Maharani-ji, there's bad news for us," her Prime Minister, looking sad, told the queen with some hesitation.

"Mahamantriji, what can be worse than the death of the Maharaja?" said the queen.

"Mother! The Company says the infant prince cannot inherit the kingdom," reported the Prime Minister.

"Who're they to decide who shall

or shall not inherit our kingdom? Isn't it for the king or, in his absence, for his wife to decide?" asked the queen in a voice at once clear and stern.

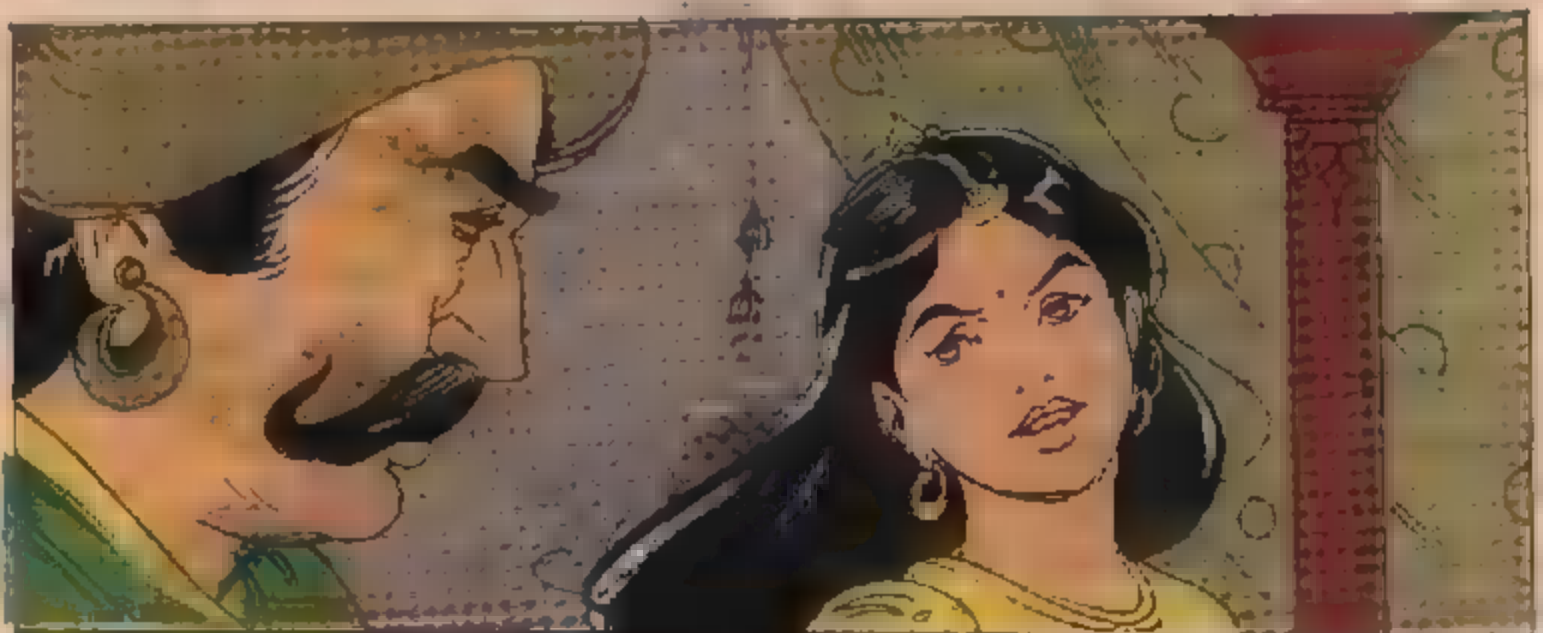
"Mother, they say they don't recognise the adoption!"

"Who're they, coming from across the seven seas, to recognise or not recognise a hoary tradition of India? Are they fools?"

"Mother, they are not exactly fools, but wicked. They want to take over our Jhansi."

"We won't surrender our soil, our Jhansi, to a gang of bandits. Let them do their worst. We'll fight for our cause, our dignity, our freedom!" declared the queen. Her loud, if melodious, voice surprised the Prime Minister and some nobles who stood behind him. But they were thrilled. They bowed to their brave queen, Maharani Lakshmibai.

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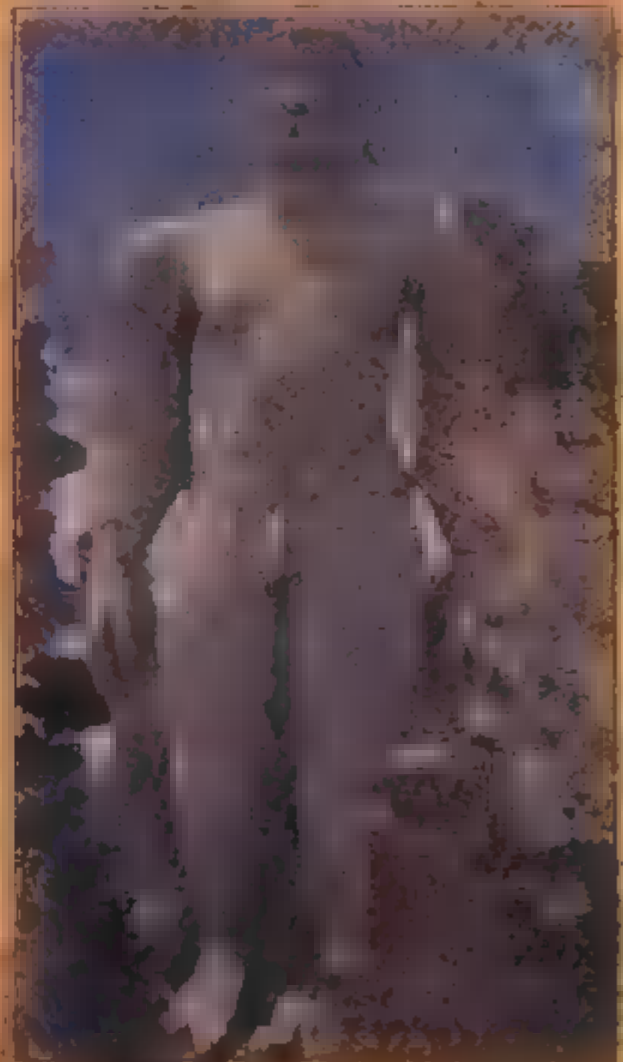


INSIGHT INTO SRAVANABELAGOLA

Sravanabelagola is 1.6 kilometres from Bangalore and is the abode of 'Bahubali', also known as Lord Gomateswara. For thousands of years, pilgrims have climbed the hill of Indragiri to honour and make offerings at the feet of Bahubali (a 17 ft. monolithic statue).

The most spectacular event occurs here once in twelve years at the 'Mahamastakabhisheka' ceremony, when thousands of Jain pilgrims from all over India participate in the sacred puja of Lord Gomateswara.

Priests stand on specially erected platforms and pour from hundreds of pots 16 different substances which include milk, curd, honey, fruit, vermilion, kumkum water, and sometimes even gold and silver coins. Chamundaraya (981 A.D.), the general of King Rachamalla, built this monolithic statue which continues to draw millions of pilgrims throughout the year.



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Haritasva

Although Haritasva was a king, his primary interest lay in music. He was a singer of great merit.

He encouraged and patronised all the gifted singers of his time, but there was none who could surpass him in music. He sang even before Sage Narada, who was a singer and veena-player himself, and Narada was charmed. So were Goddess Saraswati and Brahma.

His fame reached the ears of Vishnu. Haritasva was invited to sing before Him. He did so. His melody put the Lord to sleep.

As a reward for his achievements, he was granted the great boon of

listening to Lord Siva, the very source of music. Siva sang the *Raga Sankarabharanam*. King Haritasva listened to him with rapt attention and devotion, but when he was asked to comment on the performance, he said that the mood necessary for singing the Raga was missing in the singer. *Sankarabharanam* must be sung in a mood of a complete peace. Siva, at the moment of singing the Raga, did not quite possess that mood.

Indeed, Siva had a mixed mood at the time of singing, for curiosity about the king's capacity had crept into his mind. But, at the king's blunt comment, Siva's third eye opened up. That eye could emit fire which would reduce any being to ashes. But King Haritasva was least disturbed. "My Lord," he said, "a mistake is a mistake and it shall remain so even if I am burnt down."

Needless to say, the king was only being tested. He proved that he was not only a singer, not only a great critic of music, but also a man of unmatched courage.

Lord Siva blessed him with several boons. Thus strengthened, one day he succeeded in killing a terrible demon named Andhakasura who had taken even Indra a prisoner!



JAZZ

Jazz is a lively form of music that began in the southern states of



the United States of America in the late 1800s. A Jazz piece usually consists of ■ tune followed by several improvised solos by the musicians and ends with ■ repetition of the opening tune. No one really knows how Jazz came into being. The 1920s was the golden age of Jazz. It developed into ■ form of music that was appreciated by Americans of all ages at every level of society. One of the musicians who helped this development was the great Jazz soloist, the trumpeter Louis Armstrong. Some of the

other noted Jazz musicians were Benny Goodman, Dizzy Gillespie, and Glen Miller.

RAINBOW

FIRST DOG IN SPACE

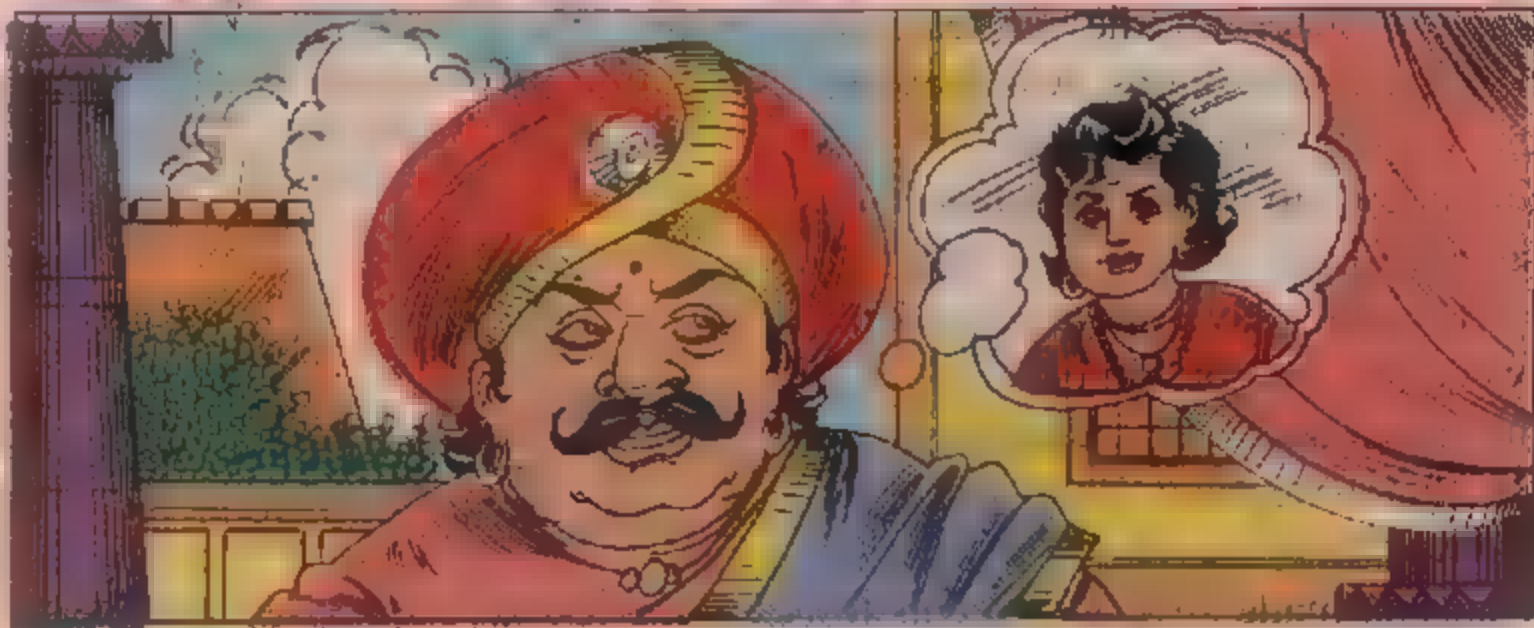
—Shital



"Laika", the first cosmonaut, was a dog. Sounds amazing, but it's true. On November 3, 1957, Laika was blasted off into space in ■ Russian space capsule, Sputnik II. He had a unique kennel which other dogs would have envied—it was air conditioned! The space capsule also had a store of food. The on-board instruments sent information on his behaviour while in orbit back to the scientists on the earth. In those days, there was no way

of bringing back a space capsule, and so poor Laika died in space, a useful though sad sacrifice.

Dheer and Veer



Ranaveer was the King of Veerbhoomi. His son was Ranadheer. When the prince was hardly five years old, the king passed away. The boy was too young to succeed him on the throne. So, Ranaveer's younger brother, Mahaveer, took over the administration till the prince grew up and became capable of ruling the kingdom himself.

Mahaveer thus knew that he could wield power only for a few years and till then he could not even possess the title Raja. Once he began tasting power, he became ambitious and contemplated ways and means to become the real king. Of course, the easiest way would be to remove young Ranadheer from the scene.

Minister Amarnath came to know of the sinister plot of Mahaveer. One

day, he managed to take the prince out of the palace without the knowledge of anybody. They both headed towards the borders of the kingdom, where a small place called Simhagiri was under the rule of the Minister's aunt. The prince would be safe there, thought the Minister.

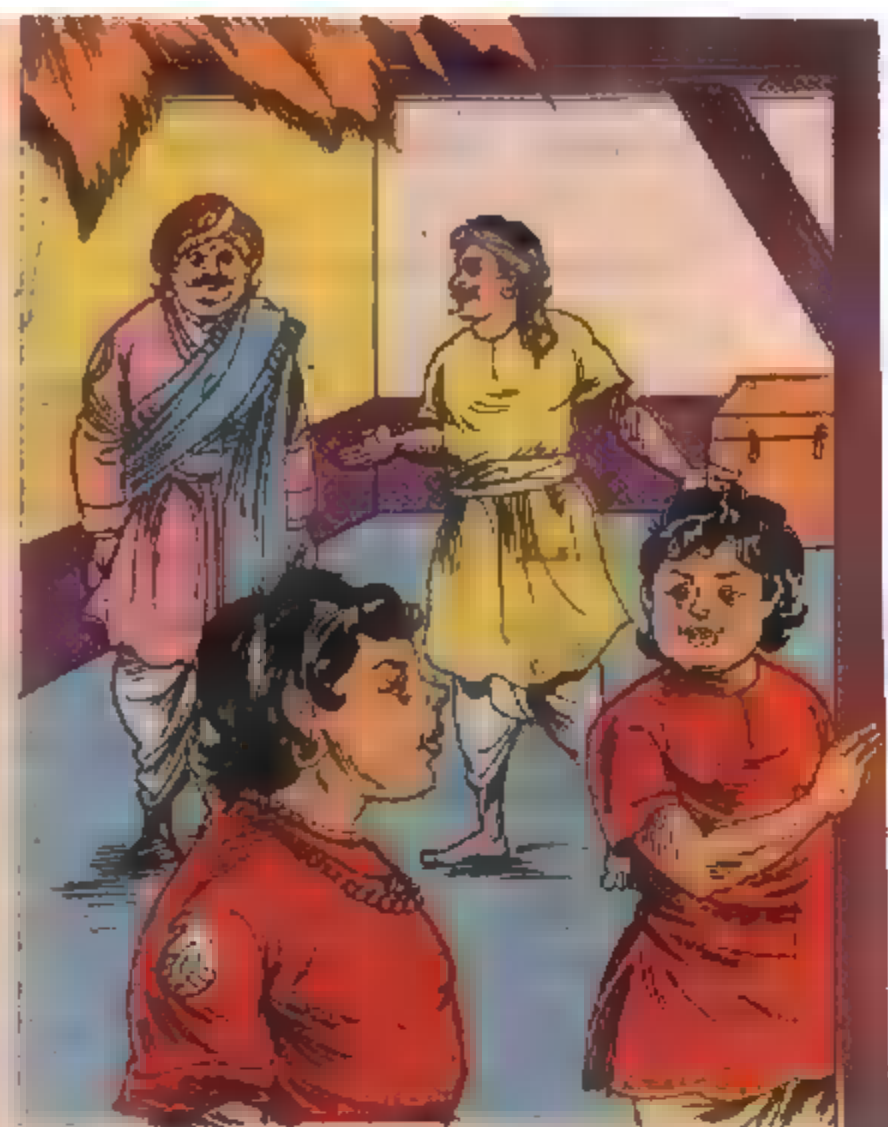
On the way, they reached Devapuri, where Amarnath knew the zamindar. The Minister and the prince halted there for the night. The members of the zamindar's family stared at Ranadheer. What a similarity? they thought. The zamindar's son and the prince looked very much alike. Same height, same size, same complexion, and same voice. There was practically no difference at all! The zamindar's son was called Balaveer. Amarnath thought the boy would be

very useful, if he could be with the prince. So, he proposed to the zamindar that Balaveer be sent along with them. "He'll be good company for Ranadheer, and he can learn all that Ranadheer learns. And they grow up together." The zamindar was too happy to agree to Amarnath's suggestion.

The next day Amarnath and the two boys left for Simhagiri, where they arrived after three days' journey. By that time both Ranadheer and Balaveer had become fast friends. The Rani made all arrangements for their comfortable stay. Days passed into weeks, and weeks passed into months.

Meanwhile, Mahaveer was not remaining idle. He had started searching for the missing prince. By and by his spies succeeded in tracing Ranadheer in Simhagiri. The information was passed on to Mahaveer. Amarnath came to know that Ranadheer's presence in Simhagiri had come to the knowledge of the prince's uncle. Just as he had anticipated, Mahaveer surrounded Simhagiri and announced that if Ranadheer were to be handed over to him, he would end the siege of Simhagiri and return to Veerbhoomi.

Amarnath decided that he would now use Balaveer to save the young prince. He revealed his plans to Balaveer. "Do you know who your friend is?" he told Balaveer. "He's is



none other than the Prince of Veerbhoomi. His uncle has come for him. If he is taken back to Veerbhoomi he's sure to be done away with. So, I propose to send you in his place. You may lose your life, but you must realise that you are sacrificing your life to save the prince. It would be a great sacrifice. What do you say?"

"If I were to die, it would not be any great loss," said Balaveer very courageously. "Instead, if the prince were to be killed, then the royal family of Veerbhoomi will go without an heir. The dynasty would thus be wiped out. That should not happen. So, I shall willingly go to the enemy camp." The boy then looked into the eyes of Amarnath, who was about to wipe his

tears of joy. "But one favour. Please do not reveal this to Ranadheer."

Balaveer then dressed like a prince and walked out of the palace and went into the army that had come from Veerbhoomi. A little later Ranadheer came in search of his friend. He was told that Balaveer had gone out of the palace along with some soldiers. The news that his uncle, Mahaveer, with his army was camping outside the palace had somehow reached his ears. He apprehended that his friend might meet with death. He saw a soldier of Simhagiri standing guard at the gate. He asked him to lend his sword and rushed into the enemy camp.

Meanwhile, Balaveer had sought out Mahaveer in his tent. "Prince Ranadheer! The prince is here! He has surrendered!" shouted Mahaveer. This brought many soldiers into the tent. He ordered them out and he was now left alone with Balaveer. "You thought you were clever, didn't you? You hoodwinked me and escaped

from the palace! You shouldn't be allowed to remain alive for another moment." He tried to catch him. Balaveer evaded him, and ran out of the tent. Mahaveer followed him. At the entrance, he was halted. "Stop!"

Mahaveer looked out. He could not believe his eyes. There was a second Ranadheer in front of him. Two princes? Who was the real Prince Ranadheer? It was a baffling thought. In the next moment, Ranadheer lunged forward and in one swish of the sword he beheaded Mahaveer. The death of Mahaveer sent his soldiers running helter-skelter.

By then Amarnath had joined them. Soon afterwards they took leave of the Rani of Simhagiri and returned to Veerbhoomi, where in due course, Ranadheer ascended the throne. Amarnath continued to be the Minister, while Balaveer was made the captain of the king's bodyguard. The people of Veerbhoomi were happy that they now had a young, brave ruler.



India's New President

Every country has its own "rags to riches" stories. Any biography of Abraham Lincoln invariably mentions his transition from a log-cabin to the White House. India's new President, Mr. K.R. Narayanan, hailed from a humble family in Kerala. He won the July 12 election to be India's 11th President (10th incumbent in the post, ■ Dr. Rajendra Prasad served two terms), in which role he will be the resident of the sprawling Rashtrapati Bhavan for the next five years. He was sworn in on July 25 to succeed Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma.

Kocheril Raman Narayanan—to mention his full name—was born on November 27, 1920 in a village some 25 miles away from Kottayam, in Kerala. On some days the poor family would not even have enough food to go round. Father Raman was an Ayurveda vaidya, like his own father. But he did not wish any one of his four sons to become a vaidya. He wanted them to attend school and rise in life.



When Narayanan was seven years old, he was admitted to a nearby Government Lower Primary School where he did not have to pay any fee. One day, he was unable to answer a question posed by his master, who gave four strokes on his little palm with his long cane. More than the physical pain, what tormented him more was that he was found wanting in his studies. Then and there he took a decision not to go to bed before learning his daily lessons. That decision stood him in good stead. Next year, in the fourth class examination, he stood first.

For the fifth class, he joined a privately-run middle school, where he had to pay fees. Whenever Narayanan could not pay his fees in time, he was denied entry to his class; he would then station himself near ■ window from where he could listen to the

teachers and copy down whatever was written on the board. This practice continued even after he joined the high school, which was some five miles away from home. He would wait till lunch time to borrow the notebooks from a classmate and, sitting beneath a shaded tree, he copied down the notes.

When he came out of high school with distinction, Narayanan expressed

a desire to join a college. Though his father was fully aware of the implications, he did not stand in the way of his son's wish. He was sent to the CMS College in Kottayam. He passed the Intermediate examination, once again with distinction. He then moved on to the University College in Trivandrum where, in 1942, he took his degree in English in the first rank.

Narayanan's ambition was to become an English lecturer. He joined the tutorial college run by the YMCA. After one year, he left for Delhi where he got a job in the Indian Overseas Department as ■ assistant. By then he had cultivated a taste for journalism. He resigned his Rs.200 job and joined a newspaper for half that salary. He applied for and was granted a Tata Scholarship for study in England. Unfortunately, ■ journey by sea was out of the question, as World War II had reached a crucial stage. While he waited for the War to end, Narayanan worked for *The Hindu* as a sub-editor and later joined *The Times of India* in Bombay. His columns under the pen-name 'Kautliya' were very popular. On April 10, 1944, he got ■ chance to interview Mahatma Gandhi, who was observing *mauna vrat* that day. To Narayanan's questions, Gandhiji wrote down his replies on the back of used envelopes, which are still preserved by Mr. Narayanan.

After the War ended in August 1945, Narayanan travelled to London and joined the London School of Economics under Prof. Harold J. Laski. While in London, he used to contribute a

weekend column for Kulapathi K.M. Munshi's '*Social Welfare*'. In 1948, he returned to India carrying a letter from Prof. Laski to his intimate friend Jawaharlal Nehru. In his letter, the professor had described Narayanan as his best and favourite student. Panditji gave him a job in the Ministry of External Affairs and posted him in the Indian embassy in Rangoon, capital of Burma (now Myanmar).

Mr. Narayanan later saw service in Japan, Britain, Vietnam, and Australia, before he was prompted as ambassador to Thailand, then Turkey, and later China. In 1978, he retired from Government service and was appointed Vice-Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi. In 1980, he was sent to the U.S.A. as ambassador.

When Rajiv Gandhi became Prime Minister, he prompted Mr. Narayanan to enter politics. He won the election to the Lok Sabha as a Congress candidate from Ottapalam in Kerala. He was made Minister of State for Planning, then Foreign Affairs, and later Science and Technology. He was elected to the Lok Sabha from Ottapalam ■ second and a third time, and was put up as a candidate for the post of Vice-President of India, which he won. As Vice-President, he also became Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.

The First Citizen never forgets his early years. When he was told that he had been elected to the highest office in the land, he remarked with modesty: "I accept the honour with all humility. I shall try my utmost to fulfil the people's expectations (of me)."

Forgoing sleep to rush to school!

★ Reader S. Vijaykarthik, of Bangalore, wants to know the difference between 'forego' and 'forgo'.

"Forego" means, to go before or precede. Like, brothers Mohan and Madhav have to reach their school in time, but Mohan has to forego because he has to write "Today's Thought" on the blackboard before the teacher comes. The word 'forgo' means, to give up one's right or claim.

★ What is the difference between 'shackle' and 'shackles'? asks Kumar Nityanand, of Chinchwad, Pune.

Shackle is something like a ring, made of iron, for securing the wrist or ankle, so as to restrict freedom of movement. The word is often used in the plural form. 'To put shackles on' will mean, to restrain someone in action or restrict somebody's freedom.

■ Reader P. Parameswar, of Athamallek, Orissa, has a doubt: Is there any difference between 'He even robbed his parents' and 'he robbed even his parents'?

The difference is very obvious. Isn't it, Parameswar? He (whoever it is) first shows disrespect to his parents, then he scolds them, he even robs them! "He" goes about robbing first the passers-by, then robs his friends; he does not spare his parents, and goes and robs even them! Do you catch the point?

This comes from reader R. Gopalekrishnan of Chennai:

ADD AND JUMBLE

Take the word KITH. Add 'N' and jumble letters to produce another word. You get THINK.

Here are ten words. Add to each of them the letters in CHANDAMAMA in the given order; jumble each of them. What words do you get? Answers next month.

- | | | | |
|------------|---|------------|---|
| 1. DARES | C | 6. GLEN | A |
| 2. OUST | H | 7. DOTES | M |
| 3. NERVOUS | A | 8. PLANETS | A |
| 4. RAGE | N | 9. BLEAR | M |
| 5. SEAT | D | 10. VIAL | A |

God's Will Be Done



The King of Manikyapuri did not believe in god and would not accept that god's will be done. He had full faith in his own will-power and physical strength. Whatever that be, his administration came to be hailed. His subjects were happy and he ensured that none of them suffered from any want. He used to go about incognito to find out how the people were faring and took action wherever he came across injustice or corruption.

He was on his rounds one day when he reached some fields. He was feeling thirsty. He dismounted from his horse and walked up to the well that he saw at a distance. He quenched his thirst, but did not resume his journey immediately. He thought he had not seen the area earlier, so he wandered for some time and enjoyed

the scenic beauty. It was then that he saw someone resting beneath a tree. From a distance he appeared to be a poor man and in deep grief. Who could that be? the king wondered.

He slowly approached him. "May I know who you are?" the king asked him politely. "You seem to be in deep sorrow. Could I know the reason?"

"What shall I say?" The man sounded frustrated. "I haven't known happiness ever since I was born. I seem to have been born into sorrow."

"Why is it so?" the king queried. "Can't you do some work?"

"Why should I work for others?" the man responded. "Can you see those three palms there? All the fields stretching up to that place are all mine. But god was not kind to me!" He heaved a heavy sigh.

The atheist king was angry on hearing the man's remark. Why should he depend on god? "A really hard-working person needs only an arm-length of farm. The yield from a small piece of land will be enough to take care of him. You seem to possess fields stretching up to the horizon. Why should you then blame god if you don't take care of the fields?"

"You're giving me all that advice?" the man protested. "What do you know? I did not remain lazy even for a single moment. The farms don't give me any yield any more. Three years ago, the yield was very good. I sent sack after sack of grain to our house. As the yield was more than what we had expected, I ordered a feast and went out to buy some provisions. When I returned, I couldn't believe my eyes. My house had been reduced to ashes! I enquired and was told that my wife had lit the fire to boil something and went out to get some dry wood. When she was away, our two sons had a quarrel and one of them pulled out a burning wood and threatened his brother, who began running around. When my wife saw them running about the place, with one of them holding the burning wood, she scolded them. The boy let go the firewood which went and hit the thatched roof and it caught fire. The house was burnt down and along with it perished the grain. We could save only one or two sacks. It was double



loss for us—the grain as well as the house."

"I would say, it was all due to your wife's carelessness," the king observed. "For one thing she should not have gone out after lighting the fire. And for another, she should not have left the boys alone in the house, knowing well how mischievous they are. All right, then what happened?"

"The next year also I toiled in my fields, and the yield was once again good," the man replied. "That year, I didn't store the grain in my house. I hired a room in our neighbour's house and as we were taking in the sacks, the rains came down. We had hardly stacked four or five sacks when there was torrential rain and the whole place



was flooded. The grain left in the open was all washed away."

"First it was tragedy by fire, then it was by water, both happening because of negligence," said the king, "first of your wife, and then nobody else but yourself. You could have expedited storing of the grains by employing more people. Why didn't you do that?" added the king sternly.

The man was till then comfortably seated beneath the tree. Now he looked up. "Your majesty! You've come here incognito!"

The king was surprised. "How did you know that I'm the king?"

"I've been narrating my woes to several people," the man explained, "and do you know how they all re-

sponded? They called it our 'bad times', 'fate' or 'god's will'. You're the only person who reacted differently. Only our king is capable of remarking that the tragedies were due to sheer negligence."

"What if I'm the king? I could even be a beggar or any one of the hundreds of subjects of the king," said the king, now mellowing down. "All right, tell me what happened later?"

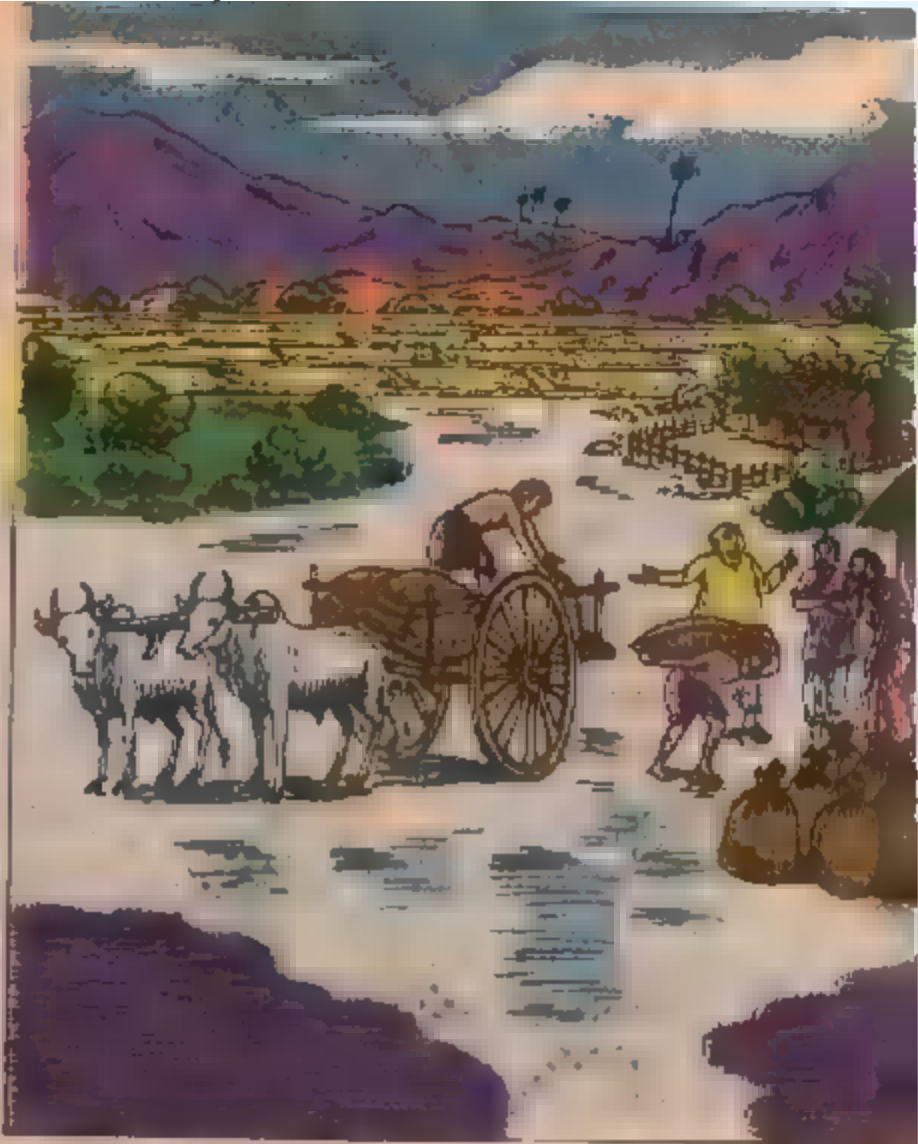
"That's another tale of woe, but I shall tell you, whoever you are," said the poor man, leaning against the tree. "I had to borrow some money from a trader to re-build the house and to buy seeds for sowing. I promised to repay the loan after the crop was harvested. That year, too, the crop was good. But before it could be harvested, the trader passed away. His son began pestering me for repayment of the loan. He was not willing to wait till harvest. So, I had to allow him to harvest the crop himself, which he did. He gave us just enough for ■ one-time gruel, and took away the rest of the crop. He came back and told me that a part of the loan still remained and insisted on my parting with the fields. I had to give up everything, keeping only ■ small bit of land for our minimum needs. I'm only afraid he may claim the crop there also. I can't approach the village *pradhan* and seek protection, because the trader's son happens to be the *pradhan*'s son-in-law. So to whom

shall I pour out my woes and grievances? How can I lighten the burden of sorrow I'm carrying? I can only turn to god almighty in the hope that He at least will listen to me."

The mention of god irritated the king. "You're stupid!" he rebuked him. "You should know what to do at what time. There's no point in leaving everything to god's will and ruminating beneath a tree. You know it is futile to plead to the pradhan. So, what should you do? There's someone above the pradhan, and you should make an appeal to him. If that also doesn't work, then go and meet the king himself and plead with him. Nothing will happen if you decide to depend on god. God's ways are inscrutable, you know that, don't you?"

"I've no doubt that you're our king," said the poor man, trying to re-assure himself that something would happen. "I've full faith in you, your majesty. You've heard my story. It's all my fate, ordained by the Almighty. If he has decided my fate, nobody else will be able to change it. Nothing will happen to those who are blessed; and those who are not cannot be saved and helped to rise in life. I've fully realised this. So, instead of tiring myself by wandering here and there, I prefer to come here and take rest."

Now the king was surprised. The man was aware that he was the king of the land and that he did not advocate people reposing faith in god. In spite



of knowing his views, the man was persisting in sticking on to his theories. "If as you say, you'll go according to your faith, then why should you bother to work in the field at all? You can very well remain at home, sleeping all the while, and wait for god to provide you everything. Why, he can even shower fortunes on you and take you to the seventh heaven!"

The man realised that the king was getting angry with him. But that did not deter him from saying what he wanted. "I'm not a fool to light a lamp and keep it against the wind in the hope that god will see that the lamp is not blown out. If we want the lamp to burn, we should provide a proper shade or at least cup our hands to



protect the flame. Even after that if the lamp were to be blown out, we can only attribute it to god's will. Similarly, what will or will not happen to me, or even to you, your majesty, has all been decided by god."

The king was getting more angry. "Suppose I meet the trader's son and persuade him to give you back the lands he has taken from you, will you attribute your good fortune to god?"

"Of course, I'll prostrate before you if that were to happen," said the man, "and praise the good Lord for making people like you come to our rescue."

The king was now so angry with the man that if he had a whip in his hand, he would have struck him several times till he fell down. But he

calmed down and said: "You mean to say that those who are fortunate will not know sorrow and those who are unfortunate cannot be helped to enjoy betterment? That it's all god's will that is happening?"

The man, with folded hands, said humbly, "Yes, your majesty, that's my firm belief. If you were to throw me on the island infested with demons, I will escape only if I am fortunate. If you were to take me to your palace, that will not lessen my misfortune, my worries, either. It's all god's will," said the man with great conviction.

"Oh! Is that so?" said the king. "I shall send you to that island soon. Let's see how god will help you to face the demons."

It was a beautiful island, with virgin forests, and everything looking green all around. However, it had a demon living there, and so the island came to be called the Rakshas Dweep. If anyone were to go there, it was certain that he would be caught by the demon and eaten. Therefore, nobody went there, and none liked to go there. Traders used to steer their ships clear of the island, lest the ship was grounded and the men on board became a prey to the demon.

When the king declared his intention to send the poor man to the Rakshas Dweep, he began to tremble. "Your majesty, why should you impose such a punishment on me!" wailed the poor man. "I must have

said something out of sheer ignorance, but won't you forgive me? What gain would you get by punishing me? I didn't mean any insult to you."

The king was amused to see the man trembling. "It is in your hands how you're going to escape this punishment. You've only to admit that all that you were saying till now is wrong! I won't send you away to the Rakshas Dweep; I shall see that you get back all your fields; not only that, I shall see that you get everything to lead a comfortable life."

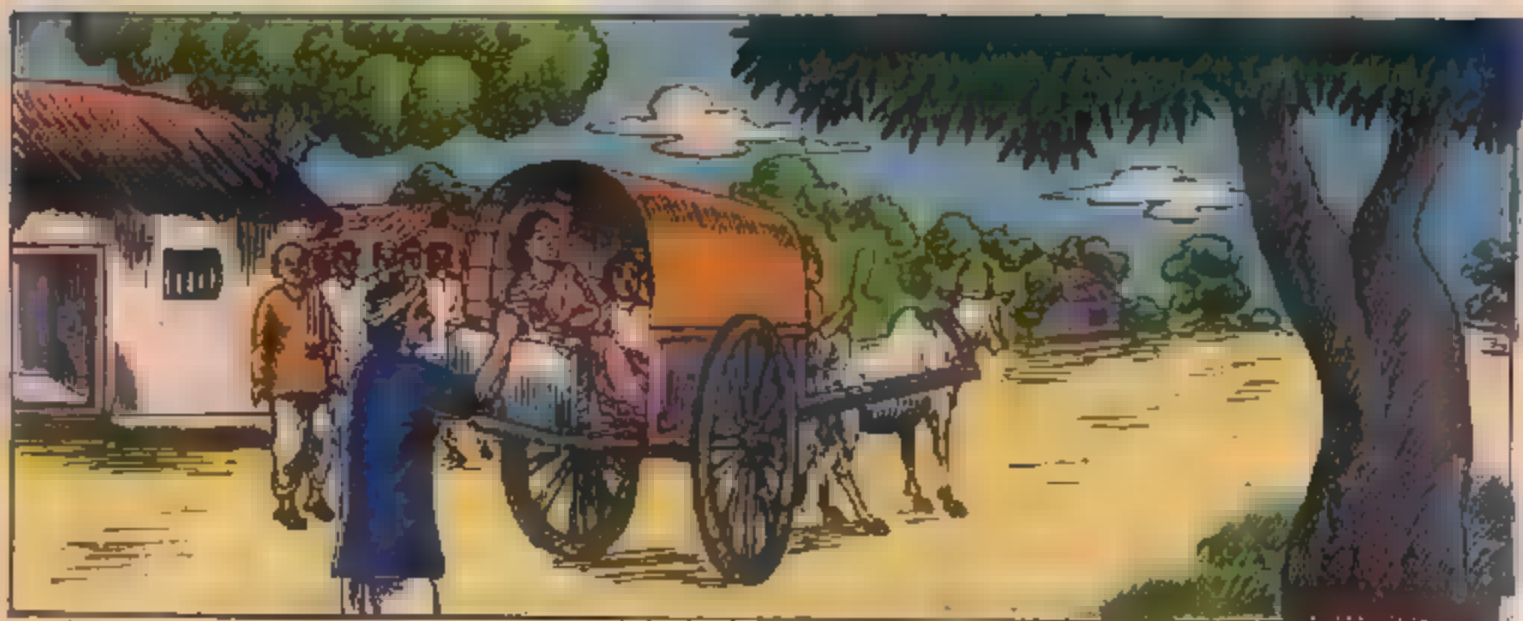
The man felt happy for a moment. But he could not agree to the conditions stipulated by the king. How could he change the beliefs that he had been cherishing since birth? For instance, complete faith in god? How could he admit that there is nothing like divine dispensation? That was not possible. That was neither proper nor advisable. He would then be cheating himself. The man did not know what to do.

"Your majesty! If I am fated to go to the island, then nothing on earth can prevent it," he said, resignedly. "Let god almighty save me! Of course, I'll be worrying about my family. But, they'll be taken care of by god in whatever way He has decided. It is their fate! You may do whatever you like with me."

Now the king had no more sympathy for him, when he found how adamant he was. He asked the village pradhan to send the man and his family to the palace. The pradhan did not try to know the reason from the king. The villagers also wondered why the man and his family were being invited to the palace. They thought that fortune had at last favoured them.

The family reached the capital, where they found that the king had made arrangements for their stay. They did not know that the king was at the same time making preparations for sending the man to the Rakshas Dweep.

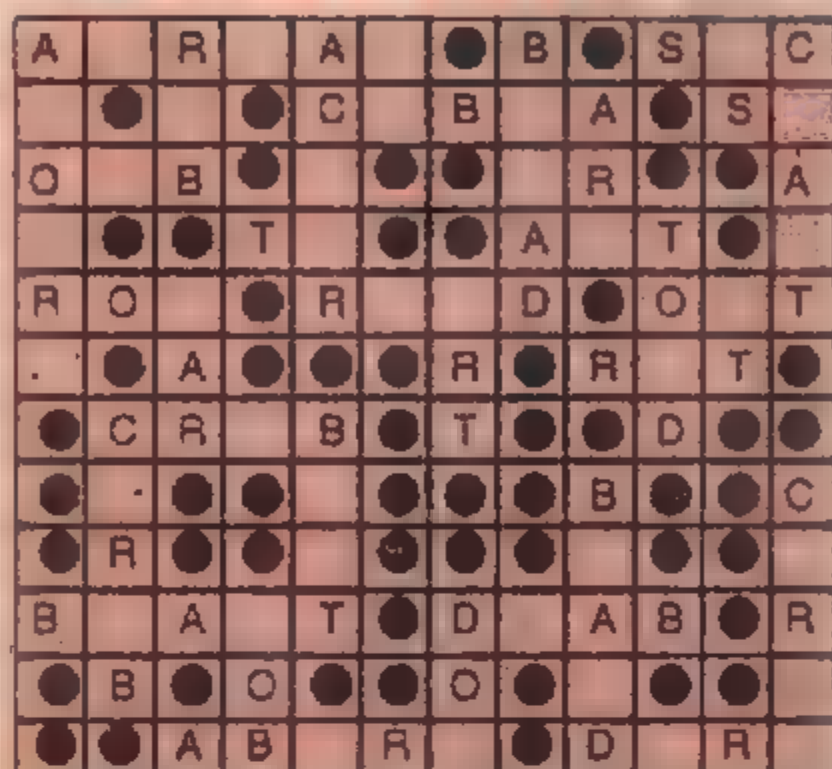
—To continue



AMERICAN PUZZLE

Find 35 words from the single word

BROADCAST

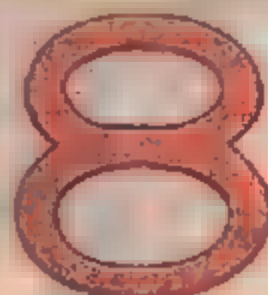
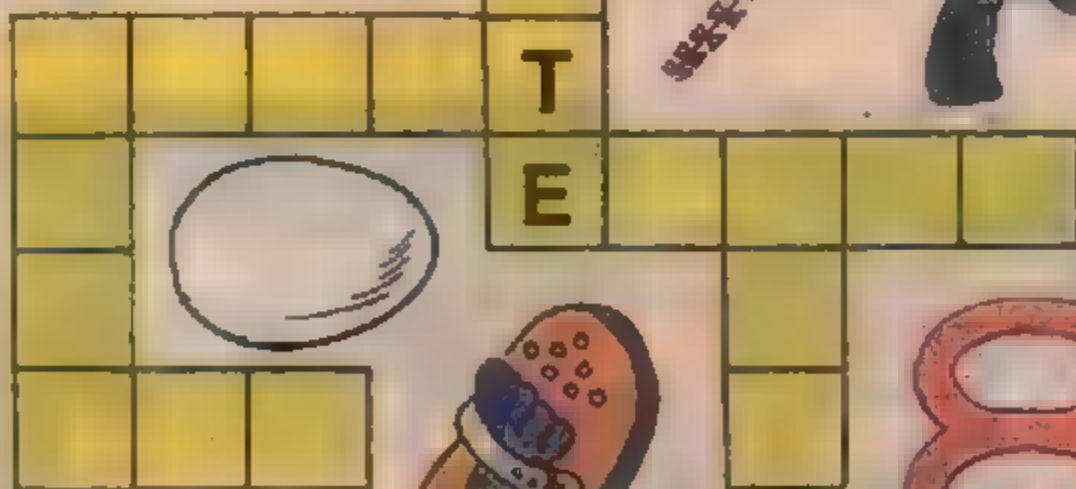
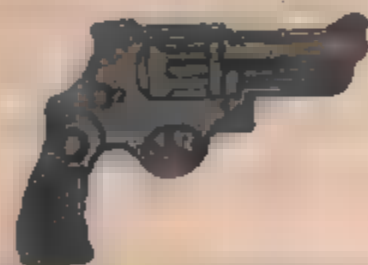


2 letter words - 6
3 letter words - 12
4 letter words - 6
5 letter words - 8
6 letter words - 2
Total words 35

Last month solution



CROSS WORLD

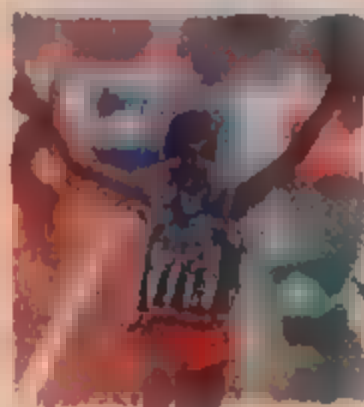


Using the picture clues make connecting words

Sports Snippets

World Records

★ Haile Gebrselassie clipped 7 seconds off to create a new world record in 10,000 metres run. He clocked 26 minutes 31.32 seconds at the Bislett Games Grand Prix track and field meet in Oslo, Norway, on July 4. The 24-year-old Ethiopian erased the 26:38.08 mark of Salah Hissou, of Morocco, made in 1996 in Brussels, Belgium. Incidentally, it was the 51st world record to be broken in the Oslo stadium,



which has by now acquired the epithet 'world record track'. And for the particular event, it was the third world record in four years. A little over

■ month earlier, Gebrselassie broke another world record when he clocked ■ minutes 1.08 seconds for 2 miles at ■ international ■ at Hengelo in Netherlands, on May 29. In the race, his contender was Nouredine Morcelli of Algeria, who holds the world records in 1,500 metres, 2,000 metres, and 1 mile, but he dropped out after the seventh lap. If Gebrselassie had broken the 8 minute barrier, he would have walked away with a 1 million dollar purse!

★ A new world record in women's hammer throw was made by Russia's Olga

Kuzenkova at the European Cup athletics held in Munich, Germany, on June 22. Her throw went 73.10 metres. She erased the record (69.58 m) set by Mihaela Melinte of Rumania, in Bucharest in March this year.

★ What is common between Sergie Bubka, Oleg Trandenkov, Okkert Brits, Rodin Gataulin, and Maxim Tarasov? They have all cleared the 6 metre barrier in Pole Vault. Tarasov was the last to join the "6-metre club" when he went above 6 metres at the Nikaia Grand Prix meet in Nice, France, on July 16. The world record (6.06m) is with Bubka made in 1988. He created world records in this event 35 times. His indoor timing ■ 6.14 metres.

★ Wilson Kipketer of Denmark equalled the 800 metre world record (1 minute 41.73 seconds) standing in the name of Sebastian Coe of Britain for the last 16 years. Kenya-born Kipketer (26 years) reached the mark in the DN Galan Grand Prix track and field



meet in Stockholm on July 7. After watching the race, Coe remarked that Kipketer's run ■ phenomenal and made a prediction that he was capable of breaking it this year.

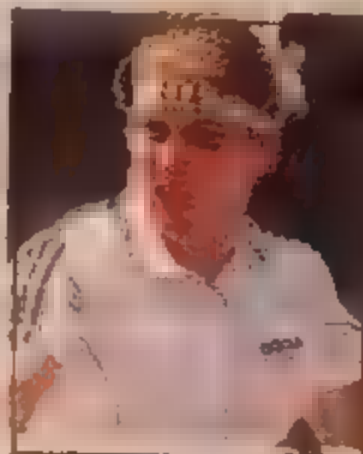
Among the 100 top lifters

★ The magazine, *World Weightlifting*, has come out with a list of 100 top lifters of the 20th century. They include seven women. India's Kunjarani Devi is one of them. Women began participating in

the event only from 1987, and India entered two years later, when Kunjarani won 3 silvers. Since, then, she has won 18 medals in world championships. Her tally of 45 medals in world and Asian meets is considered without a parallel in Indian sport. Keeping her company in the who's who is her trainer, Leonid Taranenko, of Belarus. He has trained India's Malleswari, too.

Another 'barrier' broken

★ Steffi Graf is the second woman tennis player to cross the 20 million dollar mark in prize money in one season—the other being Martina Navratilova, who has retired from professional tennis.



Steffi's earning this year amounted to \$20,005,402, compared to Navratilova's all time record of \$20,344,061. If Ms. Graf had won the French Open in June, she would have crossed Navratilova's record.

★ When Martina Hingis won the women's singles title at Wimbledon on



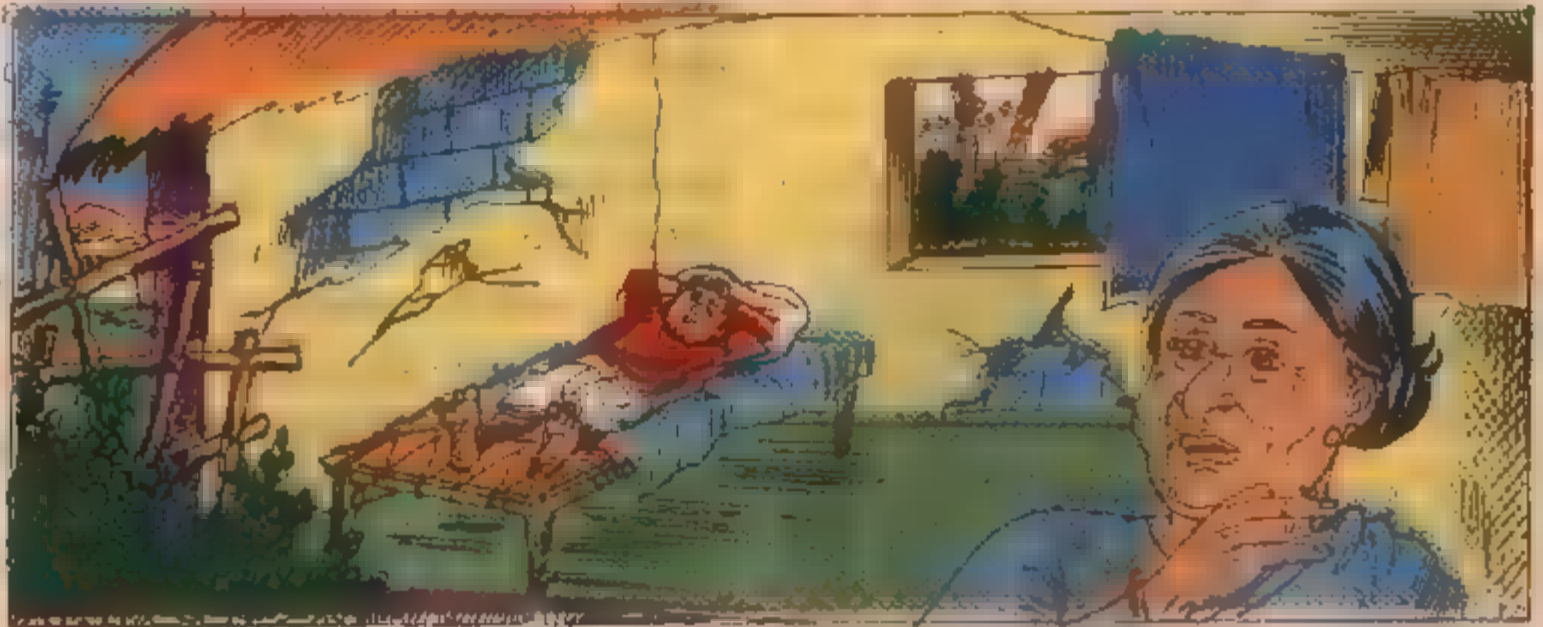
July 5, she became the youngest (16 years) champion of this century. In 1887, Lottie Dod won the title and she was then one year younger than Hingis. When the match was over, Martina Hingis remarked: "God! I'm too young to win this!" and added, "It's like a dream come true."

Young and old

★ Mathew Draper is just five and he has become the youngest player in Britain to achieve the feat—hitting a hole-in-one in a game of golf played in Banbury on June 17. It is a British record all right, though it has not yet been declared a world record. The 1.15 metre tall (shorter than a golf bag!) Matthew played with plastic clubs when he was only two. When he was four, he was given custom-made scaled-down clubs. Till now the British record was held by 6-year-old Luke Trayfoot who hit a hole-in-one in July 1994.

★ The oldest living Olympian is Leon Stukelj of Yugoslavia. He is 98. He took up gymnastics in 1908 but waited for 14 years before he took part in world championship in 1922. He won golds at the Paris Olympics (1924), Amsterdam (1928), and Berlin (1936). On his last June visit to the Los Angeles Coliseum where the 1932 Olympic events were held and which he could not take part in, he gripped the edge of a metal table, leaned forward, and nimbly balanced his 45 kg body. He is a special invitee to the Sydney Olympics to be held in 2000 A.D.

ALL BECAUSE OF A NOSESCREW



Sambayya of Sambalpur was an average young man, of good physique and good health. But what use? It appeared that laziness was his main asset.

He lost his parents when he was a little boy; afterwards he was looked after by his ageing grandmother.

She was a frail woman and did not enjoy good health. Yet, she took care of her grandson who grew up soon, but grew up as a lazy young man. Perhaps she doted him too much. She worked and with her meagre earnings, she ran the home.

Sambayya would not raise even his little finger to help her. He would lie in his bed all the while, except to get up and eat the food prepared by his grandmother with great difficulty. Her neighbours took pity on her and

goaded Sambayya to go to work and make some earnings.

One night, he visited the Devi temple in the town. He spent a long time in the compound waiting for the place to get deserted. When he was sure that no one was around, he managed to get inside the *sanctum sanctorum*. He looked around and saw that the idol was adorned with a glittering nosescREW. He plucked it and holding it in his palm, he knelt before the idol and prayed: "Devi, I shall drop half the price I get by selling this in the *hundi*. Bless me so that I won't be caught by the police!" He returned home and hid the nosescREW in a safe place.

The next day, the news spread like wildfire that the temple had been burgled and that Devi's priceless



nosescrew was missing. Who would have committed this heinous crime? Who was the intruder? The questions were posed by everyone to every other person. The people themselves came forward to make enquiries and find the culprit.

One week passed; then another week. There was no trace of the nosescrew and no clues about the thief. Sambayya thought that the people had given up all hope. So, he contemplated ways of disposing off the nosescrew.

One day he went to Manilal the jeweller. "Please don't mistake me, sir, but could I ask you something?" He went closer and almost whispered, "Do you buy stolen

Manilal was angry with Sambayya. "Don't you know what to ask of which person? How ever did you think that I do business in stolen goods? That's not something you should have asked me!"

"Please don't be angry with me, sir," said Sambayya. "I just wanted to know whether anyone had brought to you the stolen nosescrew of Devi. I didn't have any other motive."

"There's Vipinlal in the next town," said Manilal. "I'm told he accepts whatever is taken to him, even stolen ornaments. And no questions asked!"

"You could have told me that; instead of getting angry with me!" protested Sambayya.

"Angry with you? Why should I get angry with you?" Manilal reacted; now calming down. "But one thing is certain; if ever someone were to bring the stolen nosescrew here, I shall sever his hand with a knife!"

"Good! He'll deserve that kind of punishment and much more," said Sambayya. "You shouldn't let him go, sir. Even Devi won't forgive him!"

Next day Sambayya made his way to the neighbouring town. He now knew where he could dispose off the nosescrew. However, he had his own misgiving whether he would succeed in his mission. On the way he met Ramayya. He saw him take out a *bidi* and hold it between his lips. "By any chance, do you have a match-box?"

he asked Sambayya.

The young man wondered whether the next question would be about the nosescREW. "No, sir, I don't have a match-box. In fact, I don't smoke," he added and hurriedly walked away.

Before he reached the town, Sambayya saw a sight. Two men were being dragged by two policemen. They were handcuffed. He was perplexed.

He stopped a passer-by and asked him what happened. "One of the men is Sivayya. I have seen him before. As a matter of fact, he was in jail sometime ago for possessing stolen articles. The other man must have been trying to sell such goods. The police must have caught hold of both the seller and the buyer!"

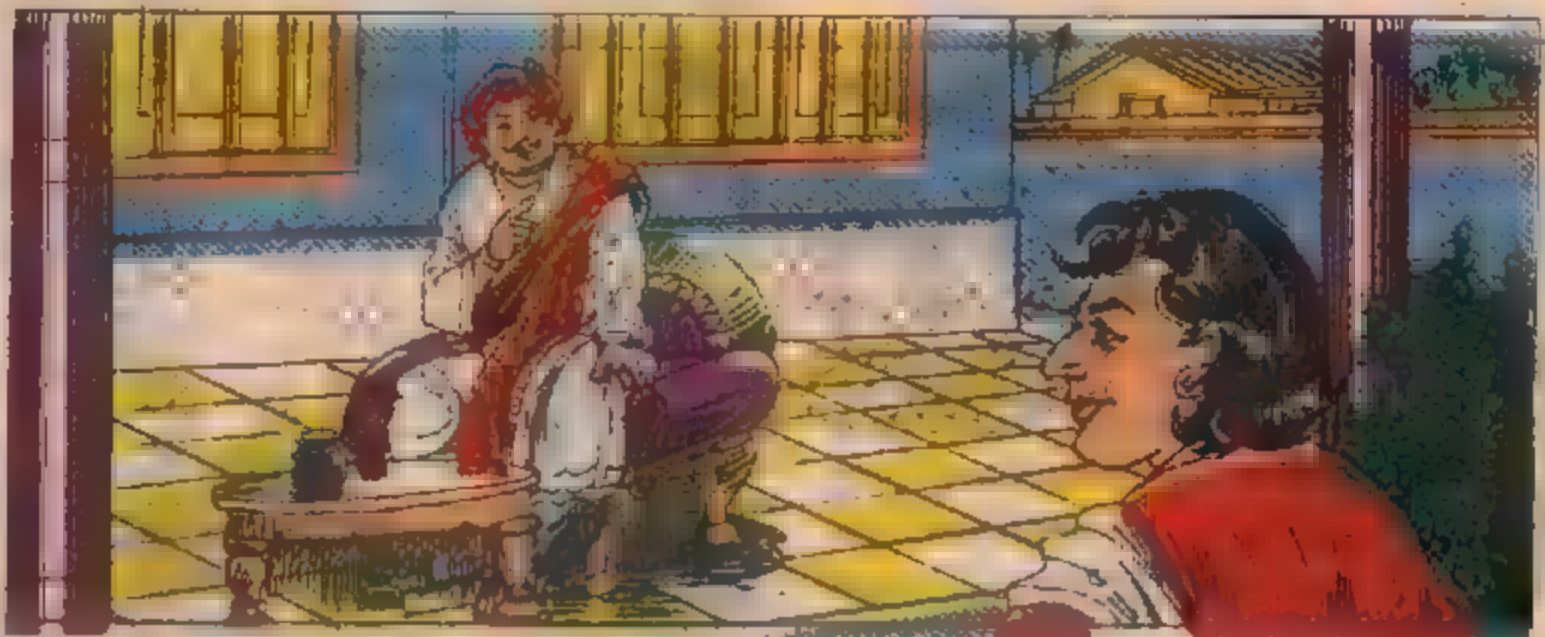
Now, Sambayya was trembling. It would be impossible to sell anything stolen. And if he were to be caught, he would certainly go to jail. What should he do? He turned around and walked back to his village. He straight away headed for the Devi temple and went in. He replaced the nosescREW on the idol. He then knelt before the goddess and prayed: "Devi! I did steal your nosescREW, but I've now returned it to you. I know I'm a sinner, but you know I was never a thief. Please forgive me!" The tears he shed were sincere and genuine. He was full of remorse.

That night Sambayya lay in bed, but no sleep would come. He had a



lurking doubt. True, he had replaced the jewel. But nobody had suspected him, nor had he been questioned. That probably was because he had promised to put in the hundi half of what he got by selling it. That was his offering to Devi. Would she be angry with him if he did not keep his promise? But at the same time he did not have any money to put in the hundi! He must make some earnings, and that meant he must do some work.

The next day he approached the zamindar of the place and requested him to give him a job, promising that he would do whatever work was given to him very satisfactorily. But the zamindar hesitated. "What work can you do? Aren't you a lazybones? Can



you work on the farm? Can you work in the house? You don't know any work!"

"Sir, I've forgotten my past! Whatever work you give me, I shall carry it out to your satisfaction," pleaded Sambayya. "Just test me once!" He touched the zamindar's feet.

The zamindar was kind-hearted. "All right, you go to my field, draw water from the well and fill the canal. I shall come and look you up at work."

Sambayya gladly went to the field and began drawing water. When he went home in the evening, he told his grandmother where he had been and

placed in her hands the coins the zamindar had given him as wage. She was very happy that her grandson was no more lazy and he had turned a new leaf in his life.

The zamindar, too, was very happy after watching Sambayya at work for a few days. He gave him a permanent job and raised his salary, too.

Sambayya did not forget his promise. He regularly placed his offering in the handi. "Devi! You helped me not to turn a thief. I'm beholden to you!" From then on he made it a habit to visit the temple every morning before he went to work.

- Scepticism is slow suicide.
- Grace makes a man irresistible.
- Every man's life is a fairy tale, written by god's fingers.
- A picture is a poem without words.
- No fool can be silent at a feast.



Why were mummies kept in pyramids and not in chambers of other shapes?

-G. Harshvardhan, Jatni

The pyramids of Egypt are the tombs of the ancient rulers - pharaohs. The architecture consists of a square base and sloping sides meeting at apex. After their death, the bodies were chemically treated for preservation for thousands of years. Years of study and research have found that the peculiar design of the pyramid was also capable of protecting them from disintegration. Scientists have now come to believe that living in houses constructed in the shape of pyramid can enhance one's health, prevent diseases, and cure ailments. Experiments are still going on.

How did the expression "fifth columnists" originate?

-Basab Chakrabarty, Chandannagar

In 1936, during the Spanish Civil War, General Mola was marching on capital Madrid; he had four columns of insurgents going with him. He boasted that a "fifth column" of sympathisers in the city was ready to betray the king and rise against him. So, a fifth columnist has come to mean a member of a group within the country to work with the enemy outside.

FROM OUR READERS

Details of battles

When *Mahabharata* was last published in the early seventies, the Kurukshetra War was described in great detail for the first nine days; the events of the remaining nine days were rushed through in one single issue. Now that you are repeating the great epic, I request that the interesting events from the tenth to the eighteenth day be described in detail as you did for the first nine days. Your readers will highly appreciate reading about Arjuna felling Bhishma with Shikhandi's cover, Abhimanyu's death in Drona's Padmavyuha, and other events in detail. Hope you will not disappoint us.

-P.B. Mohan, Annanagar, Madras

Science, please

It is extremely difficult to describe *Chandamama*. It's like describing the moon! How about starting a page called Science Scan? Please consider.

-G. Harshavardham Jatni, Orissa

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



S. G. SESHAGIRI



S. G. SESHAGIRI

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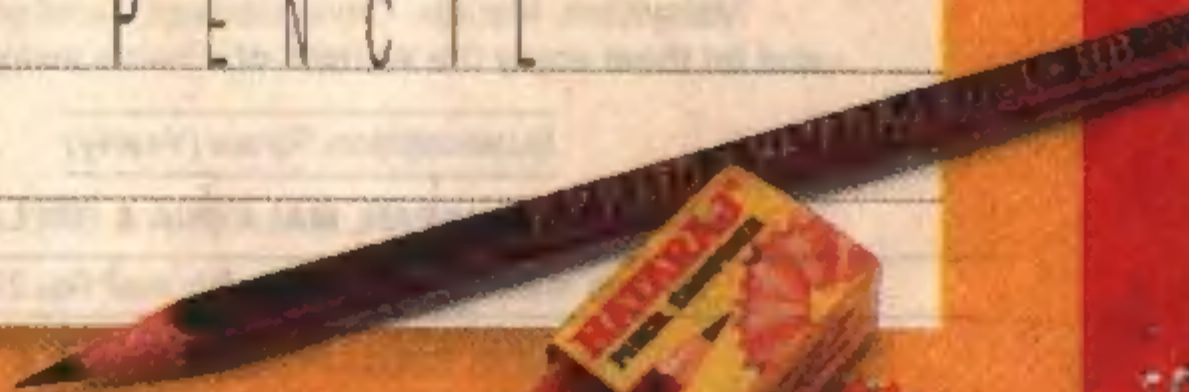
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